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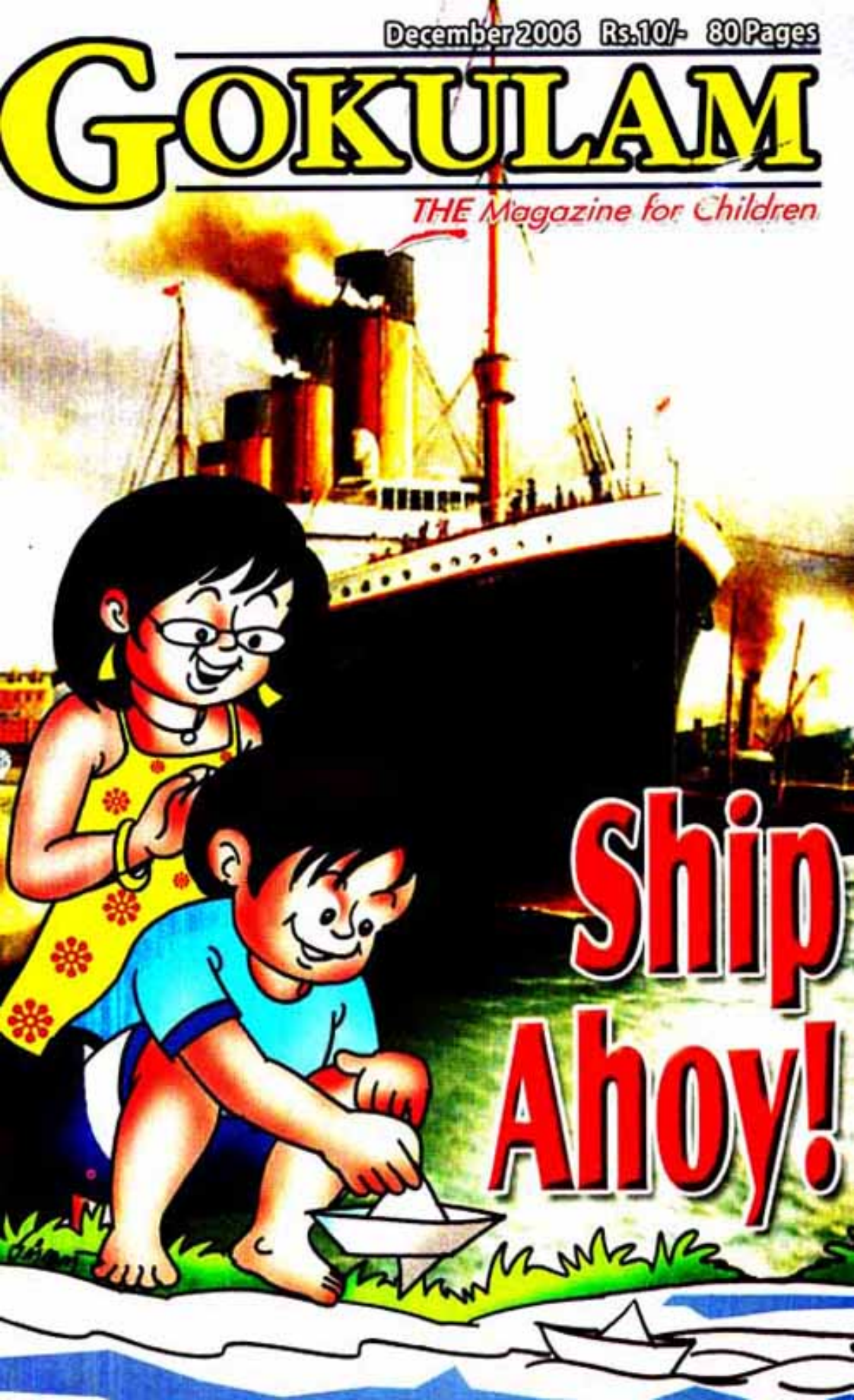
GOKULAM

THE Magazine for Children



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CONTENTS

NEW

The Mystery of the Missing Dog – 26

The drawing featured on top of each page in this issues is by

Saujanya.S,
Std II,
New Horizon Public School,
Bengalooru

Stories

The Night Mare – 18
Countdown – 42
Seven Years Ago – 52
The Soap and the Beads – 68
The Case of the Cupboard Puller – 72

Picture Stories:

Saviour Spectacles – 12
Detective Dumpy – 36
Tinku – 80

Science:

Chameleon – The Colour Craftsman – 54
Wonder Science – 67

Monthly Contest:

Gogo's Grid - 5 – 65

Favourites:

Grandmaworm, Viewpoint, Hello Doctor, Jokes, Art Gallery, Creative Corner, Let's Cook Up, News Digest, Pot Pourri

Cover design : **Pillai**

DECEMBER 2006
Vol.XIX, No.6

Of all created things the loveliest,
And most divine are children.
– William Canton

GOKULAM
THE Magazine for Children

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THE Magazine for Children

Spread the Message of Gokulam

Dear Reader,

I am sure you enjoy reading GOKULAM; otherwise you wouldn't be buying it month after month.

Why do you like GOKULAM? For three reasons: A, B & C!

* Photo: Pollachi Sundaram

A is for amusement. GOKULAM is even better than an amusement park! It gives you thrills, chills, frills, skills and ofcourse plenty of giggles – all just for ten rupees a month!

B is for betterment. You are a better person after reading each issue of GOKULAM. This betterment happens in two ways. First, your language skill improves, for, GOKULAM uses the simplest yet correct English in its pages. Secondly, you learn more, the easy way through the articles on travel, science, experiences, view points etc. The very interesting stories too have something to offer without appearing to moralize.

Finally C is for creativity. GOKULAM invites you to write .... and paint. It kindles your imagination and helps you to share your thoughts with others. 'Do it yourself' pages and puzzles keep your hands and mind active.

No wonder our President Dr.Abdul Kalam, who loves children and who desires a glorious future for them, appreciates the good work being done by GOKULAM in his letter to our CEO published in the November issue of GOKULAM.

So, spread the message of GOKULAM to your friends and through them to others. Talk to them about the ABC of GOKULAM, so that more children like you are benefitted.

– Editor

ARJUN KANNAN

Wordroots

THE Symbol of Peace

In this issue let us look at the etymology of some birds. Here are the origins of some of their names. The eagle is famous for its elegant manouvers and attacking instincts. The name comes from Old French 'aigle'. The hawk has its origins in Old English 'heafoc', of Germanic origin. Such is the aggressive nature of the hawk that in modern parlance, anyone (especially politicians) who advocates harsh action is termed a hawk. The antonym of this usage of the word hawk is 'dove'. A dove is a bird belonging to the pigeon family. Dove is derived from the Norse word 'dufa'. It is a symbol of peace.

The parrot is a bird which many people keep as a pet. It is also a character which is rumoured to talk in many short stories. The word probably comes from the French 'perrot', which is a diminutive of the male name Pierre Peter. The name parakeet (a small parrot) similarly comes from the Spanish 'pedro.'

The albatross is an alteration of 'alcatras', which name was applied to various seabirds including the frigate bird and pelican. Arabic 'al-gattas' means the diver. The albatross is notorious for being a bad omen popularized in the poem 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'.

The hummingbird is named so because of its onomatopoeic nature (words containing sounds similar to the noises they describe are called onomatopoeic words). The hummingbird which travels very fast makes humming sounds because of the rapid vibration of its wings. The Swift on the otherhand is so called because of its swiftness.

Study all the time!

Tuitions after school are a waste of time and money. Why go to school at all if the same lessons are to be studied again in tuition classes? Where is the time to persue other interests and talents?

– Amritha Sri, Std VIII, Chettinad Vidhyashram, Chennai

Tuitions are guiding lines that have propped up lately to set weak and average students onto the right track. But they are also a huge waste of time since if the relevant lessons are taught in the school itself, why extra coaching?

It is true that tuitions open up several more questions and practice material but that can also be achieved by buying questionnaires from any store instead of spending our valuable time and resources on tuitions. The extra time can be successfully spent in pursuing other activities and interests.

– Swasti Padhi, Std IX, DAV Shyamali Jharkhand

Tuitions on a regular basis are not necessary, and definitely not outside school. Doubts can be clarified in School, itself if the teachers can spare the time for it.

– Vijayalakshmi, Std IV, Devi Matric. Hr.Sec. School, Palani

Generally tuitions are useful to students below average in their studies. They can be helped at home with some extra coaching. However with both parents working, they are unable to help their children at home. So they are sent to tuition classes. Children need to relax by playing games and doing small household chores.

– R. Shri Meenakshi, Std IX, K.V. Ashok Nagar, Chennai

Tuitions are a sheer waste of time and energy. A child who pays attention in class, goes home and

revises what has been done in class and completes the homework is bound to succeed. On the other hand a child travelling to his tuition class, does not have time to refresh himself mentally or physically. He is unable to achieve much.

– Apoorva. D. Shenoy, Std XI, Bhavan's College, Mumbai

Tuitions are helpful to students who are weak in their studies . It helps us to understand the lesson better. Maths is the only subject for which many children need tuitions. We can pursue other interests during the weekends.

– K.Santhanvijay, Std VII, Bala Vidya Mandir, Chennai

QUESTION FOR THE MONTH

Should school children have parties and sleep-overs?

Send us your views by 15.12.2006. Each published entry will receive a prize of Rs. 25/-. Remember to include details of your age, class, school and residential address. Those of you who are non - residents of India should send us a local (Indian) address too. You can send entries by post or by e.mail (gokulam@kalkiweekly.com)

Sail the

The mighty sea has always challenged man to master it and see what he can find on the other side of it.

India has long been involved with the oceans. Indians have been a sea-faring people for long and their maritime tradition goes back to over 4000 years. So much so that the very word navigation comes from the Sanskrit word 'Navagati'. The archaeological evidence that is available on the Indus Valley Civilization suggests that there was a flourishing sea trade with the world outside.India has also had a great tradition of ship building. It is also true however that our ancestors have left no historical record of their seafaring activites, which means that we are unaware of our rich maritime history.

Indian kingdoms grew with the passage of time. North - West India came under the influence of Alexander the Great who built a harbour where the Indus meets the Arabian Sea. His army returned home in ships built in Sindh. Records show that

Chandragupta Maurya established an admurablity division under a superintendent of ships with a charter including responsibility for navigation on the seas, oceans and rivers. Even before Alexander there are references to India in Greek works. Roman writer Pliny speaks of Indian traders carrying away large

quantity of gold from Rome in exchange for the much sought after precious stones, skins, spices, sandalwood and perfumes.

The ships built those days of course were powered by man. Men sat one behind the other with long oars, and powered the vessels. The propulsion of the vessel with man-power and the use of oars underwent periodic changes. The Athenians have been credited with the invention of a sliding seat which increased the leverage of an oarsman by using the recoil of bent knees.

Mighty Seas!

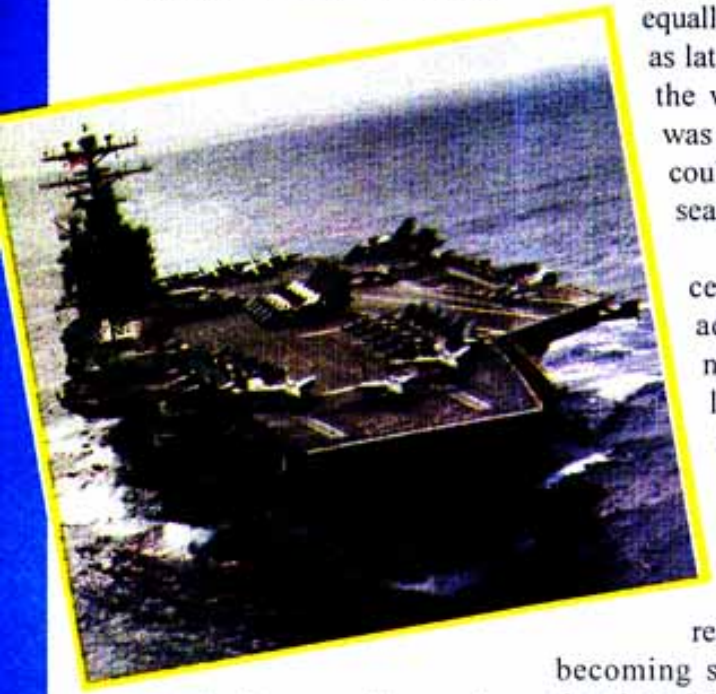
Man discovered the power of the wind and ships with bellowing sails came about. For many many centuries ships with sails ruled the seas. All the great seafarers and discoverers used ships with sails. Columbus and Vasco Da Gama who came in search of India and Megallan who was the first to circumnavigate the world used ships with sails.

With the discovery of steam came the steamboats which did not have to depend on the wind system and get stranded for days out at sea. It was in the early eighteenth century a French physicist came up with the idea of a steam propelled paddle boat. Initially there was much opposition to steam powered boats by river oarsmen and bureaucracy!

Experiments and developments continued and it was in the early nineteenth century that the first practical steam boat came about.

Steamboat plied along rivers, carrying both men and material, before venturing to the more open waters of lakes. Development of the steam boat went on simultaniously on both sides of the Atlantic. For most of the 19th century and early 20th century trade on the Mississippi River was dominated by paddle-wheel steam boats.

The first attempt at trans-



Atlantic steamship crossing took place around mid 19th century with a side-wheel paddle steamer. The paddle - wheel gave way to the more efficient screw propeller, and with improved engines, trans-oceanic shipping became economically viable. Thus began an age of cheap and safe travel and trade around the world.

The Titanic was the world's largest steamship when it sank in 1912 and Queen Elizabeth the largest passenger steamship ever built.

England was traditionally a super power on the seas. This has been borne out through the ages in her conflicts with the French. Her ships went far and wide across all the oceans. None equalled her supremacy. Even as late as the last century in the world wars, Germany was defeated because she could not match England's sea power.

The twentieth century saw tremendous advancement in technology. In fifty years or less ships have moved from steam power to diesel and then to nuclear power.

The wars, especially the second was responsible for the navy becoming strong. The Germans developed in their U - boats, as submarines were known then.

Aircraft carriers are the pride of a nation since they can fight at sea as well as inland. Battleships now carry missiles which can target enemy installations or hideouts.

Thus, ships help both trade leading to prosperity and war leading to destruction.

✉ I have a pretty large collection of GOKULAM magazines. I am very possessive of them. I often refer to GOKULAM for information. Thank you GOKULAM for helping me improve my language.

– Rashmi, Std VIII, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Damoh (M.P)

✉ I am a regular reader of GOKULAM, for over two years. I eagerly await the magazine every month. My favourites are Pot Porri, Grandmaworm and all regular features.

– S. Aishwarya, Kuzhithurai

✉ A regular reader of GOKULAM, I find it helps me improve my language. My favourites are: Let's cook up, experience, Gogo's Grid, Jokes and Viewpoint.

– S. Ragavan, Trichy

✉ Although I do not subscribe to GOKULAM regularly I always read at the school library. I love Pottering Around. Please do give us some Harry Potter posters. GOKULAM has become my very best friend. It certainly is the best magazine for us children!

– Gloria Peter Lazar, Std VIII, Grace Academy, Solapur

Harry Potter...

Hey! HP fans! Take this quiz and find out how well you know Harry Potter.

Reward yourself one point for every correct answer. Then look at the fan-o-meter at the end of the quiz and find out how crazy you are.

1. Who was the Slytherin seeker in the first match?

2. Which is Ron's favourite Quidditch team?

3. Name Dudley's school.

4. What is Gilderoy Lockhart's favourite colour?

5. Who is the head of Headless Hunt?

6. Name the bright red eraser bought by Hermione from Diagon Alley.

7. Name the hotel to which Uncle Vernon took Harry, to be away from letters (in Book 1).

8. Which creature resides in Weasley's attic?

9. Which is Ron's favourite comic book?

10. Who is Mr. Weasley's partner in 'Misuse of Muggle Artefacts' office?

11. Name Aragog's wife.

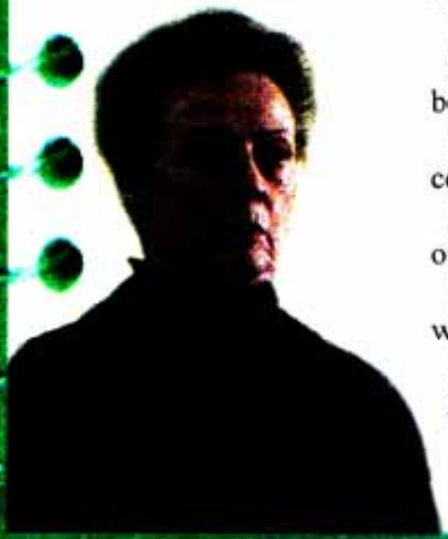
12. Which subject did Dumbledore teach before he became the Headmaster?

13. In the first book, how many bottles contained poison?

14. Name the evil plant, which is afraid of light. (Clue: Book 1)

15. How many times did Gilderoy Lockhart win the Most Charming Smile Award?

16. Professor Mcgonagall changes into a _____ cat.



17. Which of the Dark Objects (in Borgin and Burke's) gives light only to the bearer?

Fill in the blanks about Lockhart's books:

18 Year with the _ _ _ _ _ _.

19. Break with the _ _ _ _.

20. On drinking the Poly juice Potion, Hermione was supposed to change into a

Slytherin girl. Name the girl.

Compiled by
– Vahiri Gore,
Komal Tekale,
Std XI,
A.E.C.School,
Tarapur.

Answers

1. Terence Higg, 2. Chudley Cannons, 3. Smeltings, 4. Lilac, 5. Sir Patrick, 6. Revealer, 7. Railview Hotel, 8. A ghoul, 9. The Adventures of Martin Miggs, the Mad Muggle, 10. Perkins, 11. Mosag, 12. Transfiguration, 13. Three, 14. Devil's Snare, 15. Five times, 16. Tabby, 17. The Hand of Glory, 18. Yeti, 19. Banshee, 20. Millicent Bulstrode.

0-7 points:

You are not so crazy. Perhaps you read the books because someone else told you to. So buck up, use your imagination, enjoy the books.

8-15 points:

You seem to enjoy the book. But somehow, in your excitement to finish the book, you overlooked some of the facts. Go through the books once more, so that you score well in the next quiz.

16 - 20 points:

You are totally crazy. You seem to live in the Potter World. Come out of it and enjoy the real life too. It is good to know such fans do exist!

...Fan-O-Meter

SAVIOUR SPECTACLES

Story: Geetha Canpadee

Picrure: Magesh

They are so mean!
Don't cry Latha! In two days everyone will get used to it.
One evening...
When will the bus come?
A sudden dust storm arises.
Ouch! My eyes!
My hand is burning!
Luckily my specs have saved me.
TAXI!

Get in. Don't worry. Shield your eyes.
HOSPITAL
We'll go to the casualty...
In the ward...
CASUALT
Thanks Latha!
SPITAL
We'll never make fun of you again.
My specs helped all of us!

The Supreme Court ordered that all shops which had sprung up illegally in residential areas in Delhi should be closed and sealed. There was an agitation by shopkeepers which made the Delhi Municipal Corporation rather nervous. But the Apex Court was firm and the authorities have now sealed the illegal shops without facing any resistance. Now there is a move to compensate the shop owners but this is an entirely different matter. Lawlessness cannot be permitted and court orders should not be ignored.

❖❖❖

In the U.S.A, President George W.Bush is in a quandary. Though he will continue to be the President till the end of his term, his party has lost its majority in both the houses - House of Congress and Senate. The democrats won with a clear majority in the recent elections. This makes it difficult for the Republican President to carry out his aggressive policies, like the invasion of Iraq, for example.

* Drubbing at polls

❖❖❖

Saddam Sentenced; Bush Warned!

* Death Sentence

Saddam Hussein was sentenced to death by the special court in Baghdad set up exclusively for his trial. No one can say that Saddam did not commit the heinous crimes attributed to him. But the verdict loses strength because, the American attack and occupation of Iraq was totally unwarranted. The so called government now ruling Iraq is a puppet regime and the trial itself is described as a mockery of justice.

GOKULAM

THE Magazine for Children

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Cinnamon Toast!

Try out this buttery - crunchy recipe on a cold day...

You need :

Cinnamon powder - ½ teaspoon.

Powdered Sugar - 2½ teaspoons.

Butter - 1 teaspoon.

Brown or white bread - a few slices.

Method:

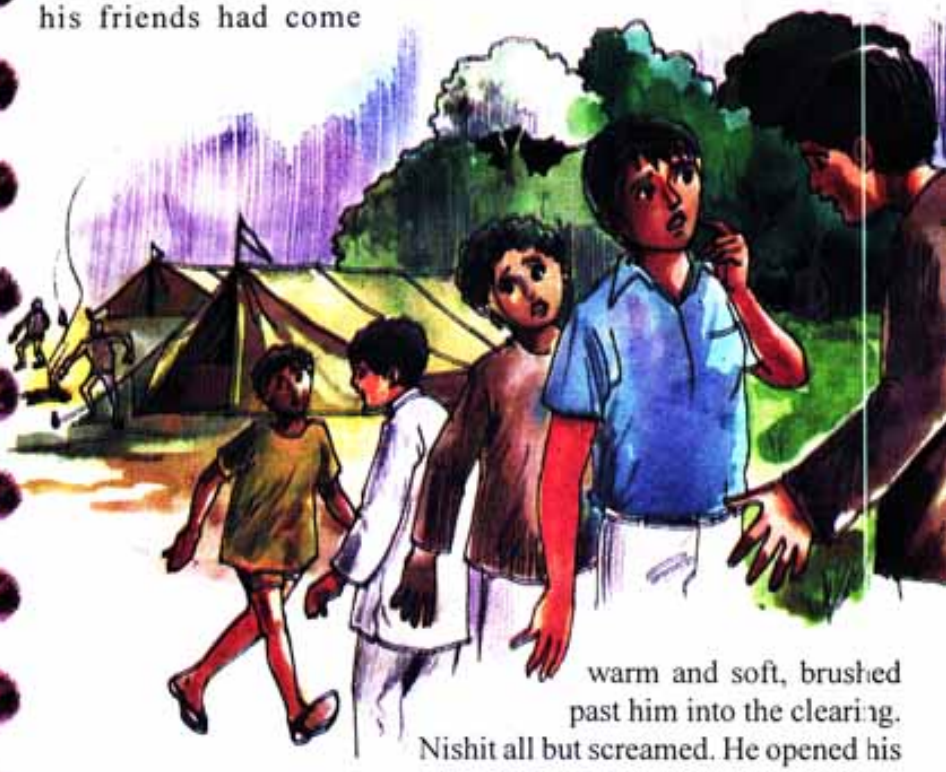
Mix the two powders well. On a heated pan, dry toast bread slices until golden brown. Now spread a little butter over the slices. A thin spread will do. Quickly, the butter will melt into the bread. Sprinkle the cinnamon - sugar combo over each slice. Take off the pan and serve hot.

- P.S. Shireesha,
Std XI,
Bangalore

Nishit was exhausted. A ten - kilometre hike was no joke! The luminous dial on his watch told him it was close to mid-night. Nishit sank behind a large bush bordering the clearing in the forest and waited.

It all started a few days ago when Nishit and his friends had come camping in the forest outside their town. Almost every night, they could hear a strange sound coming from deep within the forest. It kept them awake and scared them stiff — all of them, save Nishit. He urged them to accompany him on a night trip into the forest to investigate. But none was brave enough. So he decided to go alone. Here he was in the middle of the forest, hiding and waiting.

The watch ticked away. Half an hour later, as the first sign of doubt assailed him, he heard a sound and something warm and soft, brushed past him into the clearing. Nishit all but screamed. He opened his eyes to see a rather bizzare creature standing in the centre of the clearing. Nishit was trying to figure out what animal it was, when it let out a long and painful neigh. It was a horse! His fears having vanished, Nishit quietly approached the



animal. As he neared, he realised it was a mare and she seemed to be in great pain. Stroking her gently and speaking in a soft and soothing tone, he was able to calm down the mare.

Nishit had a way with animals. This was probably because of the time he spent at the veterinary clinic helping out his uncle. As he continued stroking her soft coat, he chanced upon a rough wet patch. On looking closer, he saw it was a deep wound that was begining to fester. Taking care not to hurt her, he gently and carefully mounted her. She let him ride. Urging her along, Nishit managed to reach the Government Veterinary Hospital located adjacent to the forest area. Nishit arranged for her to be treated and hospitalised before returning to the camp.

The Night Mare!

There was quite a reception awaiting him. 'Hey Nishit! what happened?" "Did you locate the source of those strange noises?" "Were you scared?" Nishit was bombarded with questions from all sides.

"Don't keep us in suspense! Please Nishit, do tell us what happened. Was it a spook or a spoof ?" begged his best friend, Sumanth. Nishit was just as eager to relate his experience. But he decided to have some fun at their expense. After all, they refused to go with him.

"Well.... It *was* a night mare" said Nishit. "But it has been taken care of..."

"A nightmare!" exclaimed Sumanth. "What do you mean taking care of a nightmare?"

Grinning broadly, Nishit explained," Not nightmare silly! It was night mare – a mare in the dark of the night..." And so out came the story of the most memorable night in Nishit's life.

— Anangsha Alammyan, Std IX,
Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya,
Golaghat, Asom

Name: **V.R. Jayanth**
Age : 12 years
Address : No.79, 1st floor, AGB II Stage, Mahalakshmi Puram, Bangalore - 560 086
Hobbies Painting, watching TV, reading Gokulam

Name: **Neha**
Age : 13
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Hobbies : Reading, painting, writing poetry, yoga, meditation, learning vedic mantras and shlokas, playing and making friends.

Name: **P. Sushma**
Age : 13
Address : A 25/1, Pandian Apartments, Annanagar, Madurai - 625 020
Hobbies : Reading Harry Potter books, singing, drawing, handicrafts, making new friends, playing shuttlecock.

Name: **K. Ramya Sree**
Age : 14
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Hobbies : Reading Harry Potter books, surfing the net, listening to music and singing.

Name: **Sumil L.N. Goudar**
Age : 15
Address : Roll No. 3731, Hoysala House, Sainik School, Bijapur-586 102

Will You

Hobbies : Playing hockey, swimming, diary writing, cracking jokes.

Name: **Naveen Vijay**
Age : 16
Address : MILT Residential

School, Simultala, Jamui Dist, Bihar - 811 316

Hobbies : Playing table tennis and video games, dancing, making friends, watching movies and TV.

Be My Pal...?

Name: **P.R. Rahul**

Age : 11

Address : 2A3/1A, Vel Apartments, Seerangapalayam West Street, Salem 636 007

Hobbies : Dancing, playing football, painting, reading books especially Gokulam

Name: **Ankit Jotwani**

Age : 12

Address : E-15, Chinar Retreat, (Behind Income Tax Office), Hoshangabad Road, Bhopal

Hobbies : Reading, chatting and surfing on the net, playing badminton.

Name: **Rhea Bhatia**

Age : 12

Address : F1, E Block, 22, Greenwoods Apartments, Agaram, Chennai - 600 082

Hobbies : Reading, singing, dancing, acting, watching TV

Name: **Akshatha Nayak**

Age : 11

Address : 'Maatrushree', Thuminadu P.O. Kunjathur, Manjeshwara, Kasargod - 671 323

Hobbies : Singing, dancing, reading, watching T.V

Name: **Gopika E.M**

Age : 12

Address : No 12, Himavan Apartments-I, Coconut Garden, 2nd Main Road, Nagarabhavi, Bangalore - 560 072

Hobbies : Cycling, skating, dancing, drawing.

Name: **P.S. Evangel**

Age : 14

Address : Door No. 1-64-13, MIG-41, Sector - 2, HVP Colony, Visakhapatnam

Hobbies : Reading, dancing, gazing at nature, playing with animals and children.

Name: **Nafla Salahudeen**

Age : 13

Address : No. 35, Kotmale Road, Nawalapitiya, Srilanka

Hobbies : Reading, drawing and making friends.

Dr.G.GANESAN

• R. Muralikrishna, Hyderabad

? What is Dengue fever? What are its symptoms? How can it be prevented.

! Dengue fever is a viral disease. Aedes aegypti is the mosquito that transmits this disease. It 'works' by day! Since the fever is transmitted only be mosquitos, the only way to prevent it is to prevent mosquito bites. Since mosquitos are becoming increasingly resistant to repellants and insecticides, their breeding sources have to be destroyed. Stagnant water breeds mosquito larvae and all sources or points of stagnation need to be dealt with and dried. The symptoms of dengue are high fever, intense head ache, and body pain. Sometimes, when the patient gets critical, there is bleeding from the gums or other parts of the body. If left unattended this can cause death.

• A modern scanner

• Nisha T. Soman, Port Blair

? Why do we tend to laugh when someone tickles us?

! Laughter needs a trigger. Tickling is one of the triggers. But some people are insensitive to tickling; others are over-sensitive! Nothing like laughing over a good joke with a nice friend, though!

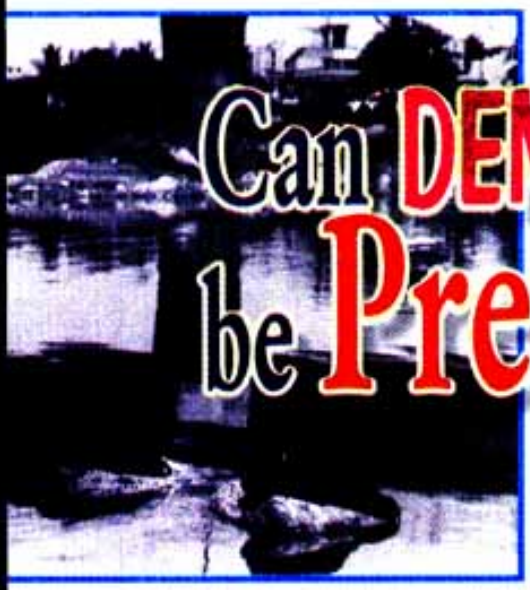
• K. Leelavathy, Tiruppur

? I am fourteen years old and frequently suffer from ulcers at the corners of my mouth, tongue, lips and inner cheeks. It prevents me from eating and talking

normally. No amount of vitamin-B tablets help me... The ulcers subside only to reappear.

! Consult a dentist to identify which type of mouth ulcer you are suffering from. He can also recommend the proper medication. Mouth ulcers can be caused due to various reasons: stress, fungus ridden tooth brushes, poor oral hygiene etc... The cause has to be eliminated to stop ulcers from recurring.

• Stagnant water breeds mosquitos



Can DENGUE be Prevented?

• L. Aravinth Kumar, Ooty

? What are para nasal air sinuses? What is their function in our body?

! The cavities in and around the nose are called para nasal sinuses. They are hollow chambers with openings for draining out nasal fluids. Their hollowness lightens the skull and helps balance the head and neck. They also keep the air that we breathe in cool. When the sinuses get infected they swell up and block the nasal passage, preventing the draining out of fluids. This condition is called sinusitis.

• Ananya Mishra, Pilani

? What is a PET Scan?

! This is a new diagnostic facility. It is the acronym of Position Emission Tomograpy. This method of scanning the body is useful to diagnose cancer, heart and brain diseases at an early stage.

Save a Forest, Save Cancer Patients

Very few of us have seen the Goliath Beetle. It is a creature, which wears a natural armour. This makes it the heaviest flying insect in the world.

Periwinkle – a bright flower is useful in fighting cancer. A chemical extracted from it, is used to manufacture a drug that treats blood cancer.

Both the Goliath Beetle and the Periwinkle plant are to be seen in the rainforest regions. But today, just as we are beginning to realise the value of these rainforests, we are losing them fast.

Rainforests, which are one of Earth's greatest biological treasures, once covered fourteen percent of the earth's land surface. This area has now dwindled to six percent.

Man has been destroying forests to gain land for 'industrial' or 'civil' purposes. Every second, about one and a half acres of rainforest disappear from the face of the earth!

Short-sighted governments and avaricious multinational companies see rainforests only as 'timber' or 'prospective industrial estates'.

The forests have grown and evolved over centuries into a complex life-balance system. Tampering with forests is tampering with human survival.

Destruction takes no time but can Man recreate these beautiful animal or plant species?

Preserving Nature is our responsibility.

— M.B.Ezhil Raja, Std X,
St.John's SSS, Chennai

(Source: Several G.K. Books)

LIGHTNING STRUCK!

• Big Ben - London

• The tip of the minute hand of Big Ben, the clock on London's House of Parliament travels 146 miles a year.

• Did you know that Great Tom, the famous clock at London's St. Paul's Cathedral once saved a man's life? In the reign of William and Mary a sentry was sentenced to death for falling asleep on duty at midnight. They laughed when the soldier claimed he was awake and had heard Great Tom strike 13 instead of 12. Luckily for him the local people had heard it too!

• Don't believe the old tales that lightning never strikes in the same place twice. In one storm, New York's Empire State Building was struck 15 times in 15 minutes!

• The Great Wall of China is the only man made structure on earth large enough to be seen from space. It stretches for 1684 miles, is thirty feet high and thirty two feet thick.

• Empire State Building - New York

• The Great Wall of China

Compiled by: **Sushma S. Kini, Std IX, Milagres English Medium High School, Kallianpur**

SANDHYA SRIDHAR

The Mystery of the Missing DOG

Thirteen-year-old Sunita whistled her signature tune for Snoopy her daschund. "Phwee, phee, phee! Come on, Snoopy, walky walk!" she sang, and simultaneously, she heard the soft clatter of Snoopy's paws and his excited panting as he came careening round the corner of the house. Snoopy was a six-month-old pup and Sunita and her family had acquired him after their previous pet, a Dalmatian, had died of old age.

He stood still before Sunita as she put the leash around his neck. Some more of Snoopy's excited breathing and snuffling, and soon, they were out of the house and down the road on their twenty-minute round.

Soon, the walk was over, too soon, as Snoopy may have said, had he been able to express himself. Just as they rounded the corner to the street on which Sunita's house stood, they saw a man and a woman jogging down the road, shouting, "Biscuit, Biscuit!" As they came closer, Sunita saw that the lady was in tears. "Biscuit, Biscuit!" the man and woman called out in turns. If it weren't for the fact that the couple was in tears, it would have been funny. What were they shouting 'biscuit' for? Sunita was soon to find out.

The lady came running up to Sunita as soon as she saw her and Snoopy. "Excuse me," she said, "Did you see a biscuit coloured Labrador anywhere?"

"No," said Sunita, "What happened?" "We lost our dog!" said the lady, not sniffling, almost crying, "The strange thing is that he went missing from our house. We have run around the whole colony calling for him. We can't find him!"

By then, the man had joined them. His face was glum and anxious. He said not a word, but Sunita saw his eyes darting everywhere, as if he hoped to see 'biscuit' appear from somewhere. They walked back with Sunita, and

New Serial Chapter -1

almost absent-mindedly, the lady bent to fondle Snoopy's ears. And then she burst into tears and began sobbing.

Missing!

"Please come home with me," said Sunita, "You can sit for a while then go home." When they reached the gate of her house, Sunita saw her mother arranging newly bought flowerpots in holders in the wall. Her mother Sangeetha, was an avid gardener and animal lover. She was a member of People for Animals, and the Blue Cross, both organizations that worked for animal welfare in Chennai. It didn't take her long to come to aid of the lost 'biscuit'. Some tea and cookies later, the couple, Mr. and Mrs. Mehra, was telling Sangeetha how 'biscuit' vanished.

"I was on the phone," said

Mrs. Mehra and I saw biscuit running down the stairs of the apartment block, "We live on the second floor. It was time for his walk and Sunil (she pointed to her husband), was taking out the leash... Biscuit is a good and obedient dog... He is an eight-month-old pup, really, but looks like a grown dog. Sometimes, he runs down the stairs and waits for us by the lift."

But that Sunday morning, when the Mehras went down the lift, there was no 'biscuit' waiting for them. Neither had the watchman seen him, which was strange. "But the watchman is not a reliable witness," said Sunil glumly, "He misses too many things these days. Remember that salesman who had come up the other day and the watchman had not seen him at all?" he turned and asked his wife. Rathi Mehra nodded. "Yes, we need to have him changed. He is useless," she concurred.

Sangeetha looked thoughtful. "Sounds strange," she mused, "Is there an open pit or a well somewhere around your apartment block or somewhere else he may have got stuck?" she enquired.

The Mehras shook their heads. "Not that we know of," said Sunil, "But I think now that we should register a missing dog complaint with the police. And we will also appreciate your help Sangeetha, in this."

Sunita's mother nodded. "I will help you," she said, "But first, let me come with you to your apartment and take a look around. Maybe he's somewhere around or bitten by something or hurt and you may have missed him."

The Mehras looked a little worried by this thought but they looked relieved that they had her help. All of them got up to go. "I will also come with you mum," said Sunita, as she put Snoopy in his kennel and told their maid who lived with them that they were all going out.

"Take care of the house, Kamali," Sangeetha called out to the maid, as they shut the door behind them and exited the house.

The Gang

The Mehras apartment was not too far, but was a clear five-minute brisk walk from Sunita's house, around the corner in the road perpendicular to the street where they lived. As they walked down the street, they bumped into Ranjith

and his close pal Suresh, who were quite obviously making their way towards the colony playground, with their cricket equipment. The boys were both in the same class and in the same school as Sunita, but were much shorter in height. Sunita, who was tall for her age at 5' 6", took great pleasure in pointing out that they looked like kids beside her. This she did because for long, the boys and she had been arguing over who was superior – boys or girls. To her chagrin, she found that not being a natural sportsperson was an issue – it meant that she was not fast enough or good enough for games; and the boys often used this excuse not to include her in their games with the neighbourhood kids.

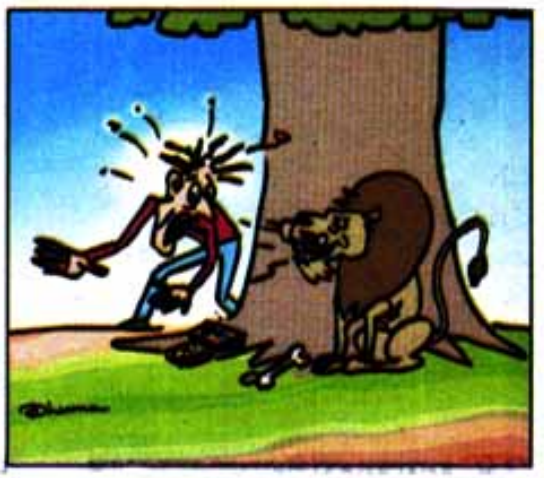
Very soon, the tables were turned. Once she turned twelve, Sunita found that she was slowly gaining height, and much faster than the boys! Soon, to her glee, she found herself much taller than them, and used this to get her revenge on Ranjith and Suresh, who were quite embarrassed by their lack of height.

This was a bone of contention between the boys and her and they rarely spoke to her or acknowledged her if they saw her, though they lived in the same colony.

Now, both Ranjith and Suresh stopped when they saw the motley group of the Mehras, Sunita and her mother. Their curiosity piqued, they stopped to smile and chorused, "Hi Sangeetha aunty!" Sunita's mother being the nice, friendly sort, stopped to say hello and then ask, "Did you see a Labrador down this road anytime a while ago?" "A what aunty?" asked Ranjith confused. "A dog," said Sunil, "A creamy brown dog the colour of a biscuit, a little fat and..."

Suresh looked at them all and interjected, "Oh, that friendly dog that you take walking every morning uncle? That fat dog you call Biscuit? Yes, the vet was taking him away. Didn't you know?"

Next time:
Who took Biscuit away?



I study well, but get tense during exam time. How can I overcome this problem?

— Akshaya, Chennai

I do well in class, but I have

a fear of exams, what am I to do? —Lokesh, Chennai

Dear Akshaya and Lokesh,

It is the system which is to be blamed for this. Jawaharlal Nehru once said, "Any fool can ask questions which the most intelligent person cannot answer." One doesn't know what to expect in the exam, whether the questions will be easy or tough; out of portion or even out of syllabus! In addition, you are aware that the outcome of the exam will decide your entire future. What more is required to make a person nervous? Even the brightest of students become tense. Let us hope that the exam system will change for the better. Meanwhile, prepare well ahead of the exam day and as it nears, try to relax by taking deep breaths and through meditation.

• • •

Why is there a difference in the price of the same product manufactured by different companies? Is the cheaper one inferior?

— Rakesh Banir, Kolkatta

Dear Rakesh,

The cost of a product is determined by the quality and prices of the inputs, the expenses incurred for transport, advertising etc.. A cheaper product is not necessarily inferior. The profit margin may be less; but the profit margin in each unit may be more. Individual taste and preferences decide the actual sales of different products. There is also an element of compatibility. While the lather and scent in a particular brand of bath soap would be wonderful to many, it

may cause allergic skin reactions in a few. It is better to stick to a particular brand which suits your body and purse!

• • •

I am too tall for my age and I have some more growth years be-

I'M HEART BROKEN...

fore me. I want to become an astronaut. But I read recently that only persons under six feet are selected. I am heart broken. What can I do?

— Ezhil Raja, Chennai

I want to become a space scientist. Is it possible for me to join ISRO or NASA? I am myopic in both eyes. (-5)

- K. Raghuraj, Chennai - 61

Dear Raghuraj,

Please read the reply above, I have given for Ezhil Raja. It holds good for you too. Except that you will have to consult an eye specialist instead of an endocrine specialist.

Love

Grandmaworm

Dear Ezhil Raja

There are two aspects to your question. (a) If your height is too much above average, may be there is some hormonal imbalance and you will have to consult an endocrine specialist. It's better you discuss the matter with your family physician first. (b) Every aspirant cannot become an astronaut. It requires a lot of study, specialised training and determination. Your aim must be to join a reputed college offering aerodynamics and aeronautical engineering as subjects. After graduation and post graduate studies you will have to enter an American University to study rocket engineering, space technology etc. If you cannot proceed till you achieve your goal you may have to be satisfied with being employed as an engineer in the Indian Air Force or some commercial airliner. Goodluck.

• • •

Srinivasa Ramanujan THE

Srinivasa Aiyangar Ramanujan was a great mathematics genius, who pioneered a new era in Indian mathematics.He was born in Erode on December 22, 1887. All through his life, Ramanujan was fascinated with numbers. There are many stories of his ability to astound his teachers with mental mathematical feats! So great was his fascination with mathematics that he would sometimes stay up all night tackling difficult problems, refusing to sleep until he had solved them.

When he was in high school Ramanujan came across a mathematics book called Synopsis of Elementary Results in Pure Mathematics by G S Carr, which helped Ramanujan teach himself mathematics. He began to make important discoveries.

While he was at the University of Madras as a research student, he began to correspond with G.H. Hardy at the University of Cambridge. This eventually lead to his leaving for Cambridge. The four years that Ramanujan spent in England were his most fruitful. In his collaborations with Professor Hardy, he constantly amazed his mentor with his analytical skills. Ramanujan's own work on partial sums and products of hyper-geometric series have led to major development in the topic.

However life in England did not suit his health. His strict vegetarian diet and walking on cold floors saw him in the hospital often. One favourite story about Ramanujan revolves around a visit that Hardy paid him in hospital.Hardy commented to Ramanujan that the number of the taxi that he had just arrived in was 1729—a very uninteresting number. Ramanujan quickly replied

that it was in fact a very interesting number, as it was the smallest number that could be represented as the sum of two cubes in two ways: $1729 = 10^3 + 9^3$ and $1729 = 12^3 + 1^3$ This number has since been known as the Ramanujan Number.

Prof Hardy unhesitatingly admitted that the discovery of Ramanujan was his greatest contribution to mathematics.

Ramanujan received many honors in England. He was elected as a fellow of Trinity College, and then became the first Indian elected to the Royal Society of Mathematicians. Had there been a Noble Prize for mathematics, Ramanujan would surely have received it.

Speaking at an international conference at Chennai in 1987, Prof. Richard Askey of Wisconsin University said, "We make a discovery only to find that Ramanujan had already discovered it!"

The damage his health had suffered in England was permanent. He died on April 26, 1920, a year after he returned home. He was only 32.

The young genius had left behind a wealth of mathematical information in his notebooks, which have since become very famous. Most of what is written in his notebooks are discoveries with no proofs. Given Ramanujan's genius, we can be sure that these are true, but modern mathematicians are trying to prove some of his theorems.

MATHEMATICAL GENIUS

Source: *Compilation from the lectures of Prof.V.Bhaskaracharyulu.*

— Sai Deepak,
Std IX,
Sainik School,
Korukonda

ADITI IYER

In the 13th century, Venetian festivals called regata included early forms of boat races. Even today, boat races are called regattas.As a sport, races on the Thames started in 1715, these are the world's oldest boat races that continue even today.

In rowing, the athlete sits in the boat facing the stern, and uses oars to propel the boat forward. In most competitive forms of rowing, the boat is narrow and the oars are attached to oarlocks at the end of outriggers from the sides of the boat. These boats also have sliding seats which allow the rower to engage his or her legs as part of the rowing stroke which increases the leverage. It is a demanding sport requiring stam na and endurance.

There are two forms of rowing: Sweep rowing and Sculling.

Sweep rowing is where each rower has one oar and holds it with both hands. Sculling is where each rower has two oars, one in each hand.

Racing boats, usually called "shells", are long, narrow, so as to cut through the water smoothly without drag. Originally made from wood, shells are now almost always made of reinforced plastic for strength, durability and less weight.There are a large number of different types of

boats . They are classified using number of rowers. In all forms of modern competition the number is either 1, 2, 4, or 8.

Although sculling and sweep boats

Swathi: A promising oarsperson from Tamil Nadu has won National and International medals.

ROW

are generally identical, except having different riggers, they are referred to using different names:

Sweep: straight pair (2-), coxed pair (2+), straight four (4-), coxed four (4+), eight (8+) (always coxed). Sculling: single (1x), double (2x), quad (4x).

The cox is the one steering the boat and encouraging the team.

Oars used to propel the boat are 250–300 cm long poles with one flat end about 50 cm long and 25 cm wide, called the blade. An oar is often referred to as a "blade" in the case of sweep oar rowing and as a "scull" in the case of sculling. A sculling oar is shorter and has a smaller blade area than the equivalent sweep oar.

Classic oars were made out of wood, but modern oars are made from synthetic material, the most common being carbon fibre.

In India, most rowing originates from Boat Clubs in the cities and in river and backwater areas in rural areas. Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andamans, Orissa, Manipur, Chandigarh and Maharashtra are known to have teams of repute. The Services have had a long history of producing oarsmen of repute for the country.

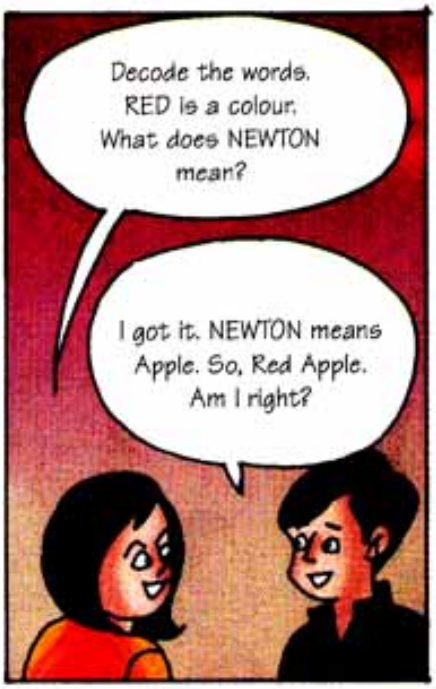
DETECTIVE DUMPY 6

Story: Marudhan
Pictures: Pillai

This is beginning of the secret. Now, look at this.
Something is scribbled there. Let me read it. "RED...NEWTON." What does it mean?
RED NEWTON
It's my grandfather's writing. He is no longer with us today. But he has left this message.

I see. Have you found out what it means?
Yes. If you want the answer, come with me.

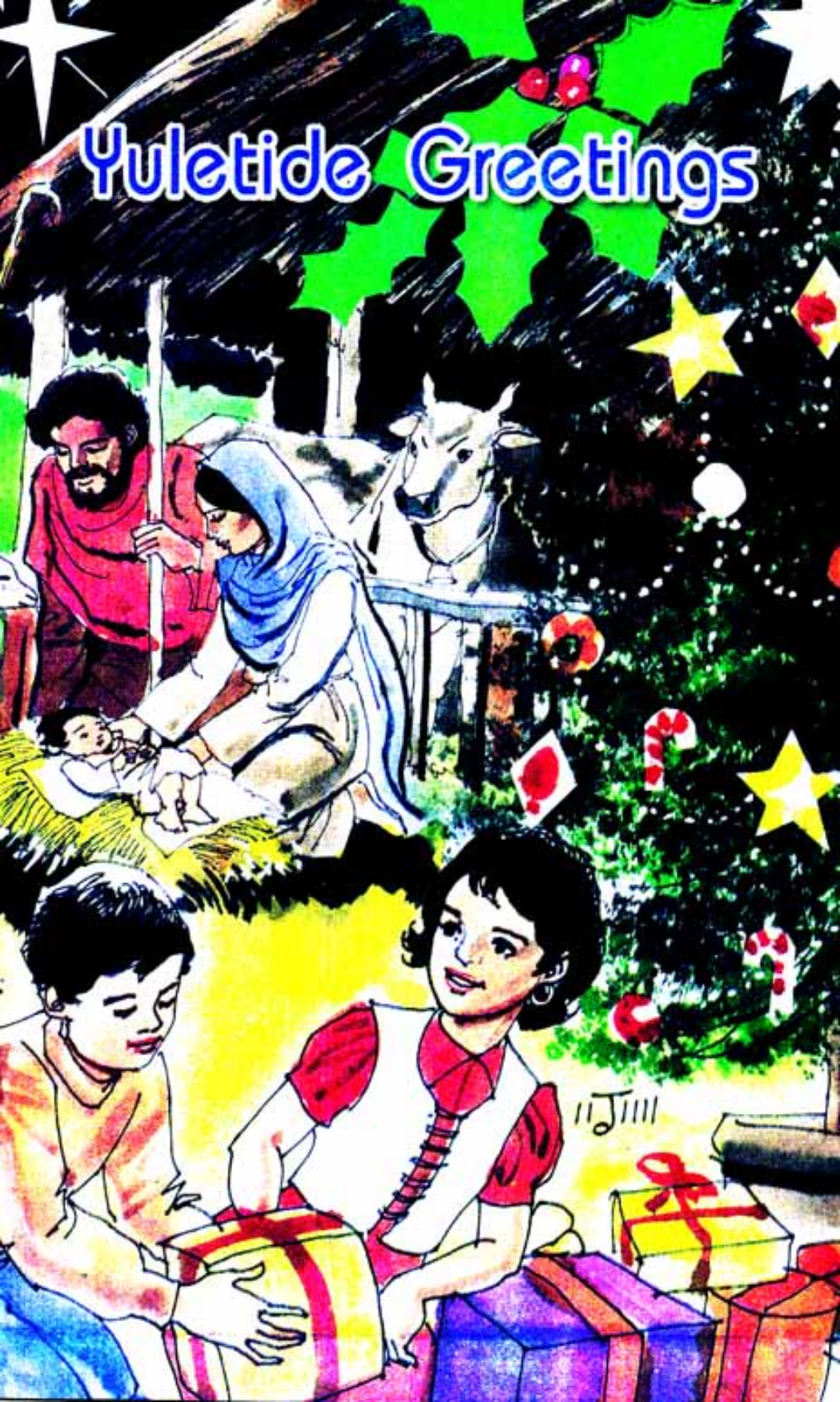
Dolly lead Dumpy to the hall. There was a painting there too.
Now, the answer to the first clue is here.
A table and lots of fruits. Beautiful. Now where is the clue?


Decode the words. RED is a colour. What does NEWTON mean?
I got it. NEWTON means Apple. So, Red Apple. Am I right?

Perfect. So there is an apple...
Now, isn't there something written on it?
Yes.
'MINI NIAG'
Now, where does this clue takes us ?
I don't know. I could decode the earlier one. But not this one.
Don't worry, we will find that out. I think your grandpa was a cryptologist. He has left some message through his clues.
Yes, you are right. He was interested in symbols and codes. He studied a lot of books and conducted a lot of research.
MINI NIAG. He says Mini. So, it's an incomplete word. Niag chould mean Niagara. Niagara means waterfalls.
Wow...Good. But, Dumpy there isn't any Niagara painting here.
Don't look at it as painting. I got it. Show me your bathroom.
Bathroom? Okay. Come

Dumpy looked closely at the shower and was excited.
Look up there near the shower. This is Mini Niagara. Water Falls! Got it?
Yeah... there is something written here. Oh my god! They are numbers.
'20, 8, 5, 2, 9, 2, 12, 5 Turn 26. Dumpy. I am absolutely blank.
20,8,5,2,92,12,5 Turn 26
This is a very simple code. Find out the alphabets corresponding to the letters. 20 stands for T, 8 – H, 5 – E... The whole thing means THE BIBLE. Do you have The Bible at home?
After some struggle, they found a copy of The Bible in grandpa's room.
Here is The Bible.
Turn to page No.26. What do you see.
Wow! A letter written by my grandfather. Let me read it.
Dear Dolly, I am glad you have broken the code. Now, there is an important research paper attached to this note. This has to be reached to the Archaeological Department. I have made some discoveries about Egyptian Mummies. Please hand it over to them safely.
This should be an important document. We will hand it over to the department, tomorrow. Keep it safely till then.
Thanks Dumpy. You are a master code-breaker.
No. Your grandfather was a master code-maker!

CAROL
SONGS


Yuletide Greetings

A Clean

Tarun's best friend at school was Prasad. He was a cheerful chap, easy to get along with. He was good at studies too, though not outstanding. On occasions he had even helped Tarun with some of the difficult problems in maths.

This morning he didn't attend class and Tarun wondered, 'why?' He missed him at lunch time. They usually ate together, occasionally exchanging choice pieces of special items if any. Tarun decided he would phone to find out what was wrong with Prasad. They had exchanged phone numbers though they did not have each others' address.

But, in the afternoon, as he returned home, Tarun forgot all about the phone call when he saw that the garbage in the corner of his street had not been cleaned. The large bin was full of garbage with a few flies hovering over it. A street dog had jumped into the bin and was trying to get morsels of discarded food.

The sight and stench made him sick. He covered his nose with his handkerchief, quickened his pace and walked on the other side of the road to reach his house a few feet away. Oh, how he hated garbage bins and garbage collectors!

"Mom! The garbage has not been cleared! It is an awful sight, the strench is unbearable!"

"Don't complain to me," said Mom. "You know the phone number, call up ONYX and tell them!"

Tarun did. He was connected to the supervisor of that area. He was courteous. "Sorry sir" he said, "there have been several absentees today. It's the dengue fever, you know. It's spreading like wild fire."

"I don't care if it's the dengue or chikungunya, it's your problem. As far as I'm concerned I want the garbage at our street corner cleared. How can we live here? It's hell!" Tarun raised his voice, pretending to be an adult. " We are paying our taxes regularly,

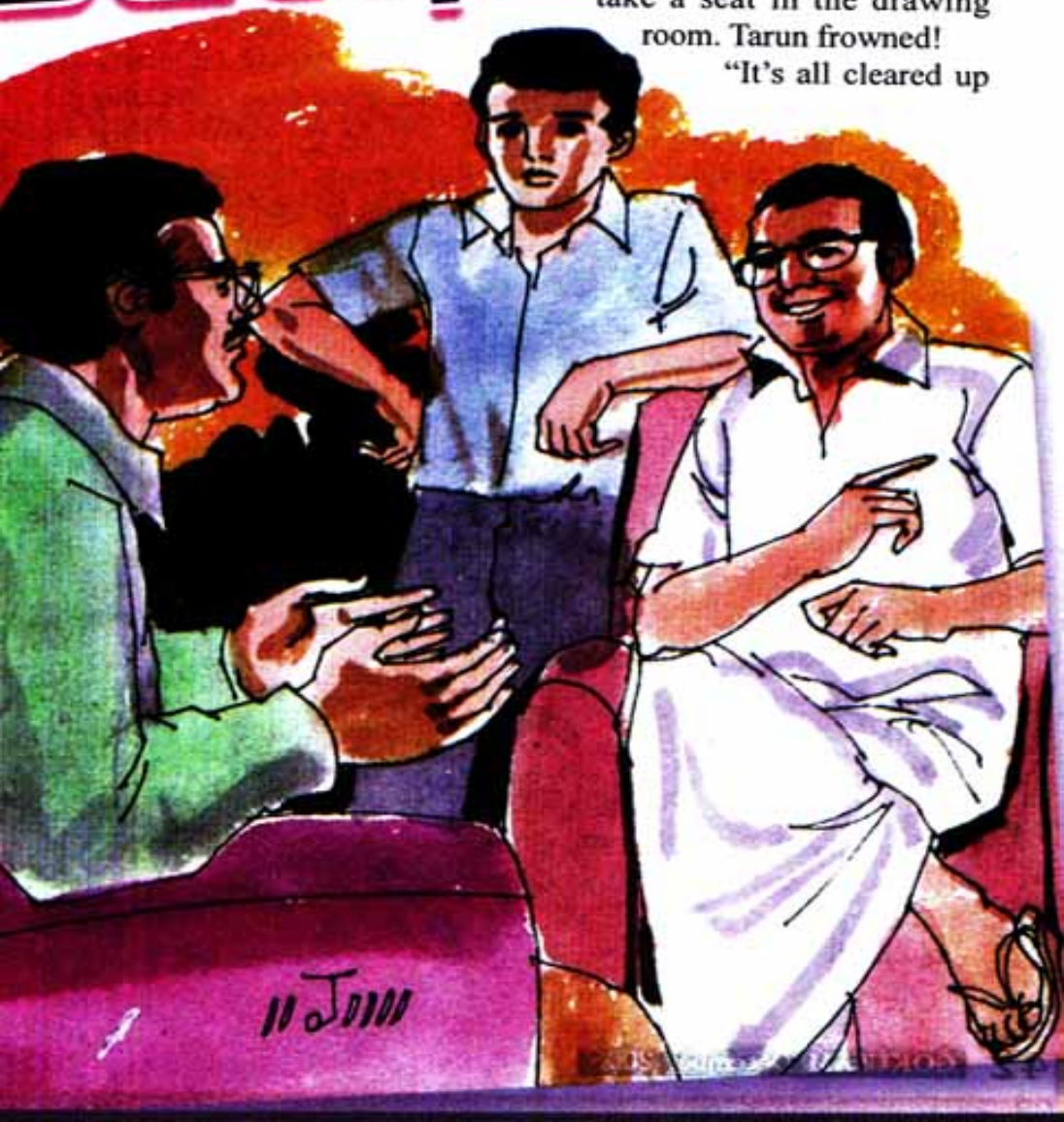
you know!"

"Of course sir, I understand. Our workers – those present – are doing overtime to compensate for those who have fallen sick. They will soon be there. I will personally see to it."

That he did. He called at Tarun's house late in the evening. By that time Tarun's father had come home. The supervisor extended an ID card and Jagan invited him to take a seat in the drawing room. Tarun frowned!

"It's all cleared up

Sweep!



sir," said the supervisor. "Your street corner is spic and span. You can sleep well tonight. Not a bit of garbage and not a wiff of stench."

Jagan laughed. He understood what had happened. With a sidelong glance at Tarun, he thanked the supervisor. "Your boys are good", he said, "They usually do a neat job."

"In turn we take good care of them, sir! We provide them uniforms, gloves, caps, shoes and the implements to tackle garbage. The huge pick- up trucks have lifts and the large bins don't have to be emptied manually by our boys. They are given good medical attention and vaccinated against diseases."

"Even so, they are affected by dengue", Tarun interjected.

"Sure, but dengue as you know is caused by mosquitos and there is no vaccination for this virus."

"Tell me, how can anyone work as a garbage cleaner? The very sight of garbage is repulsive to me" said Tarun.

"Oh! we motivate them. It's not just a job, though they are well paid. They learn to look upon it as a social service. Our boys are proud of themselves."

"I'm glad" said Jagan. "That's the way it should be... How can we help to ease your work?"

"By putting all the garbage inside the bin without littering the street; by not putting spent batteries and fused bulbs and tubelights into the bin, for they are toxic and above all by having a kind word of appreciation for us."

"Kind words don't cost any money; not even a paisa," said Jagan. "We shall be liberal. But... I've been thinking, you know... Do you make wealth from waste?"

"No sir, We don't. The corporation pays us to clear the garbage and we have a contract. That's all. Processing of garbage requires a lot of investment. The state government can think about it. In the

Teacher: Which is the largest gold producing area in our country?

Student: My mother's safe?

– Chandana,
Std VI,
Bethany School, Vizag

BIRTHDAY BASH!

S. Sandhya celebrates her 13th birthday on 9th December. "A very very happy birthday and have a enjoyable day". Wishes from your dearest friend

– R. Anandita, Chennai

Siddhant Kumar Behera celebrates his 10th birthday on 19th December 2006. " Best wishes and happy birthday to you Zugu Dada"

– Rohan & all the family members.

long run it would be very profitable."

"How?"

"Garbage is separated. The organic part becomes excellent manure for the fields. Paper and plastic can be recycled and so. You know in Tokyo, even sewage is treated and separated as solid manure and water intended for the city's gardens!"

"The time will come when our cities too wake up," said Jagan.

"Sure! Let's hope the day is not for off," said the supervisor. "Now, I should really get going. My son too is down with dengue and I would like to be with him as early as possible."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that," said Jagan. "How old is he?"

"About the same age as your son, sir, He's in the ninth standard at St.Michael's."

"Is his name by any chance, Prasad?" asked Tarun.

"Yes, but how did you know?"

" A little bird told me!" said Tarun. "Tell your son, I missed him at school today and that I wish him a speedy recovery."

That night when Tarun went to bed, he made up his mind not to look down upon garbage cleaners but to respect them more than anybody else.

I. Fill in the blanks with the help of the clues given below

		T			D				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2,4,5 - One more than nine

7,8 - Article before a vowel

1,9,10 - A person of the highest skill

S				L			T	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

2,3,4 - Past tense of 'EAT'

6,7,9 - Untruth

			A	N		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2,3 - (Pron) The thing already spoken about

1,6,7 - A recurring spasm in the muscles of the face

	R				L	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1,7 - Plural of 'I'

3,4,5 - A writing fluid

				L		M
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2,4,6 - Vowels

1,3 - General knowledge (abv)

— N. Lokeshwar,
Std V,
Petit Seminare Higher Secondary School, Puducherry

II. Can you match these planets with their symbols.

a. Venus b. Neptune c. Saturn d. Earth

e. Uranus f. Mercury g. Jupiter h. Mars

— Nikhita Prabhakar, Std V,
Vidyaniketan Public School, Bangalore

1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8

III. India's largest...

1. Dome
2. Church
3. Planetarium
4. Residential Building
5. Natural Cave
6. Lake
7. Exhibition grounds

— Yogika Garg, Std VIII, Little Scholar School, Hyderabad

IV. Riddles

1. What do you do with a mouse that squeaks?
2. What makes Ma get mad?
3. What do you always take but never give back?
4. What goes around the world and never leaves home?

— Yashaswini.K, Std IX, Vijaya High School, Bangalore

Around the Universe!

Answers

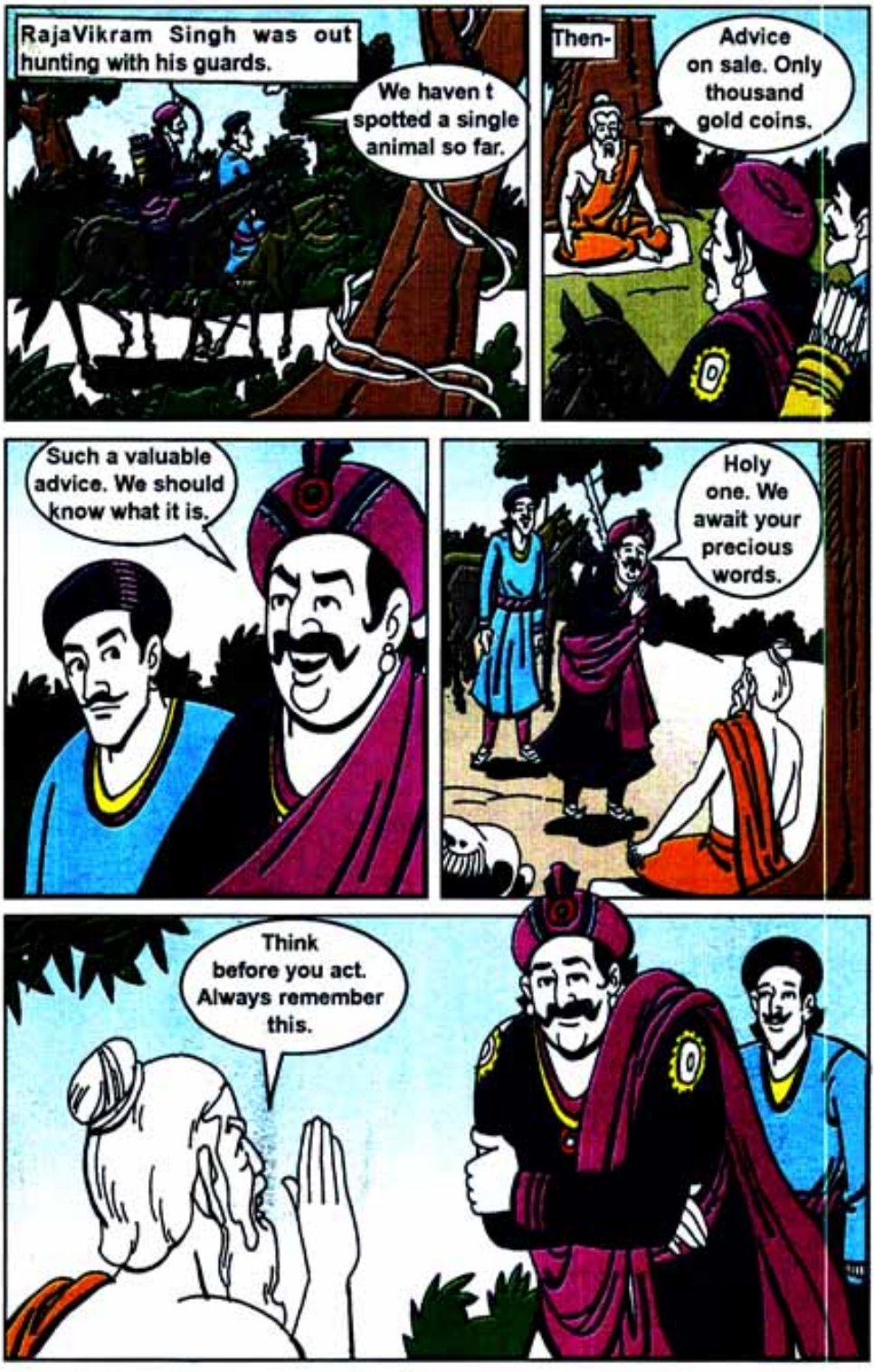
I. 1.Attendance 2. Satellite 3. Titanic 4. Wrinkle 5. Gokulam

II. a – 2 , b – 8, c – 5, d – 3, e – 7, f – 1, g – 6, h – 4

III. 1. Gol Gumbaz, Bijapur, 2. Se Cathedral, Panaji, 3. Birla Planetarium, Kolkata, 4. Rashtrapathi Bhavan, New Delhi, 5. Amarnath, 6. Chilika Lake, Orissa, 7. Pragathi Maidan, New Delhi.

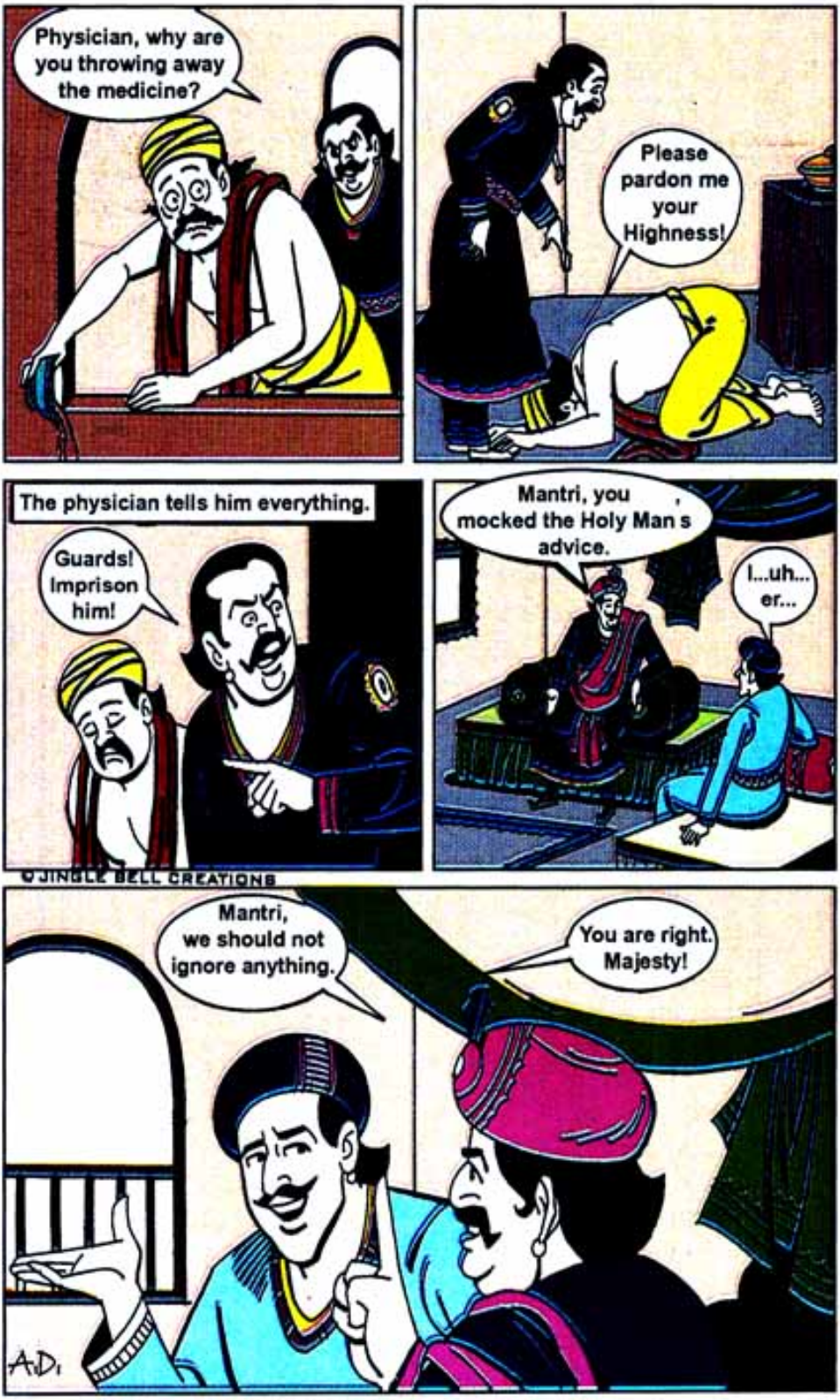
IV. 1. You oil him, 2. Letter 'd', 3. A bath, 4. A world atlas

The Advice Carved on Stone!



Do you call , this advice? It s just common sense. He fooled you.
You lost your money.
Time will tell.
Later ..
Engrave that advice on stones and display them all over the country.
What a simpleton!
One day an enemy of the king visits the royal physician.
Poison the king and I will pay you handsomely.
Very well!

A few days later the king takes ill. The physician arrives...
This is the right time for me to act!
Eh! What is written there?
He reads the message on the stone.
If I poison the king, he will die, and the ministers will hang me...
...Then of what use are gold coins to me?

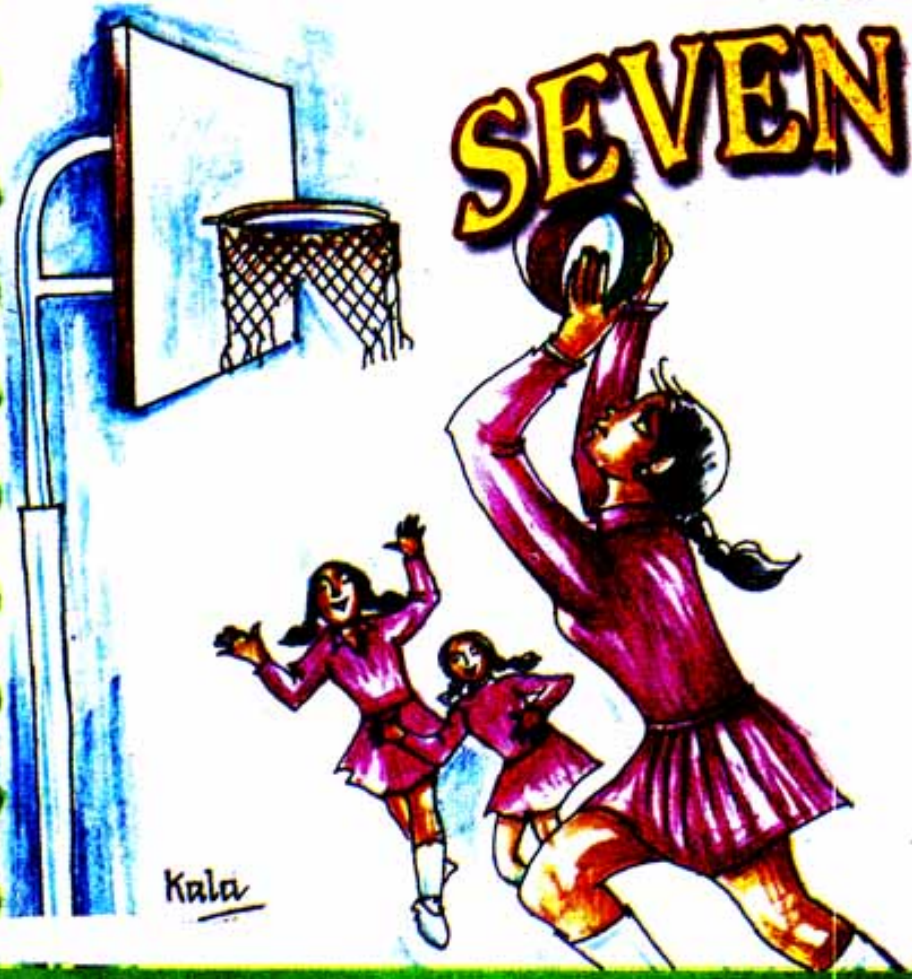

Physician, why are you throwing away the medicine?
Please pardon me your Highness!
The physician tells him everything.
Guards! Imprison him!
Mantri, you mocked the Holy Man s advice.
I...uh... er...
©JINGLE BELL CREATIONS
Mantri, we should not ignore anything.
You are right. Majesty!
A.D.

SEVEN

I walk into the basketball court amidst cheers and applause from my fellow classmates. As I go in, memories flood my mind. I am filled with the confidence and comfort that I used to feel when I was with my sister — Naina. Suddenly I feel myself being transported into the past — seven years ago.

It was the same atmosphere. The annual inter-school basketball tournament was to take place and my sister Naina was the captain of the team. Our school had reached the finals and I was so proud of my dear sis. Eight years and a world of difference separated us and yet we loved each other more than we loved our own self.

The match began. It was a game full of expectations for both teams. Every time a team scored, cheers and applauses followed it from the students. Players ducked, ran and tried their very best to scorch a point. Students from both schools were sit-



Years Ago...!

ting with their fingers crossed and as the match was drawing to an end, the excitement had reached fever pitch. Both teams had scored an equal number of points. With just ten seconds left, Naina came in possession of the ball. She darted from her opponents and when just two seconds were left, she scored!

The basketball court erupted. Students were clapping and cheering madly. My sister was the hero (or in this case heroine) of the match. The celebrations began in full swing. Students from all classes came up to congratulate Naina. I was so proud of my dear sister. Of everyone present to celebrate our victory, I was the happiest. It seemed as though nothing could spoil this glorious moment of victory.

Naina suddenly became breathless and started gasping for breath. People rushed over to help her. They tried to give her first aid but nothing seemed to work. Naina's eyes were glassy and there were blue patches around her eyes. Soon, the blue patches were beginning to spread and everyone began to panic. A teacher had called the ambulance and they were working frantically to save her but within seconds, my darling Naina was no more.

Doctors said she had had an intracranial bleeding. The next few months were the worst of my life. I did not understand where Naina had gone. She had never been away from me this long. After all, how can you expect a seven year old to understand death. The truth finally sank, I would never see my dear sis again. I broke down. I was inconsolable. Naina had gone far, far away.

I am now captaining my school team, playing the same basketball tournament final. I look up at the sky, certain, that somewhere Naina, will be watching me, as proud of me as I was of her seven years ago.

— A.S. Gomathi, Std VIII,
Sacred Heart Convent School,
Jamshedpur

CHAMELEON—The Colour Craftsman!

-Aazhi

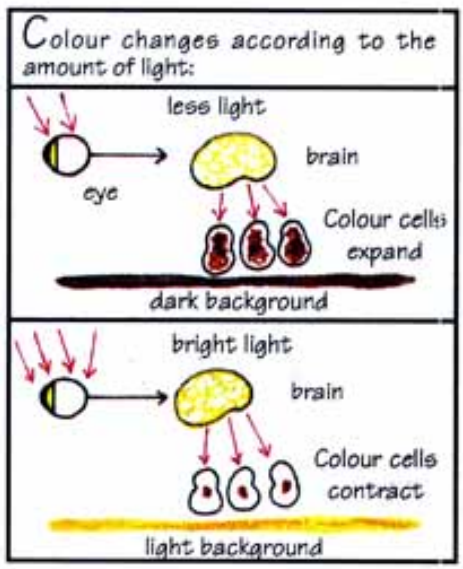
The best known among creatures that change their colour, is the chameleon.The chameleon is a reptile. There are about 300 species of the lizard family and the chameleon is one of them. There are some 80 species of chameleon!

A chameleon sitting on a branch with thick foliage, takes about ten minutes to change colour so it merges with its surroundings. It can also change into yellow or black to escape its enemies.

The change in colour is a physiological phenomena and is brought about due to the colour pigments in the skin. The colour change is brought about in two ways.

1. The light falls on the skin, the cells are affected and the colour changes.

2. The surrounding light that falls on the eyes is transmitted to the brain and the colour change is effected.



The chameleon preys on flies, crickets, cockroaches and beetles, which it catches with its tongue. A chameleon about 12 cm long can stretch its tongue up to 15 cm!

As it sees an insect approaching, the chameleon will stretch its tongue. The insect gets stuck to its tongue because of the sap – sticky substance – at the tip of the tongue. At once the tongue is withdrawn into the mouth and the chameleon swallows its prey.

The tail of the chameleon is also unique. It is as long as its body! The tail is used as a fifth foot! It curls its tail round the branch. When it clings to a branch with its four feet and tail, not even a severe storm can dislodge the chameleon from its perch.

The chameleon can stay absolutely still and without any movement of its lead, use one eye to look behind it and another eye to look ahead all at once!

The chameleon is a slow moving reptile. The male doesn't ever get off the tree. The female descends to the ground once a year to lay her eggs!

The female lays her eggs in a hole on moist earth. She lays about 25 at a time and climbs back on to the tree. Once the eggs hatch, the young chameleons too climb on to the tree.

But the female of the horned Kenyan chameleon does not leave the tree to lay eggs. In fact, she does not lay eggs at all but, gives birth to her young ones on the tree.

The smallest variety of the chameleon is the Kenyan chameleon. It is approximately the size of the human thumb—about 7 cm.

The largest chameleon is the Madagascar chameleon. It is about 60 cm long! This large creature preys on mice and small birds.

LAUGH!

Teacher : Rahul, tell me what is the centre of gravity?
Student : The letter 'V' sir!
— Yazhini Anbumani, Std VII, Kalaimagal Kalvi Nilayam, Erode

Father: When you write a letter to your friend, should you not take care to write well...?
Son: But, daddy... My friend cannot read well. So how does it matter..?
— Anushree S. Hadgali

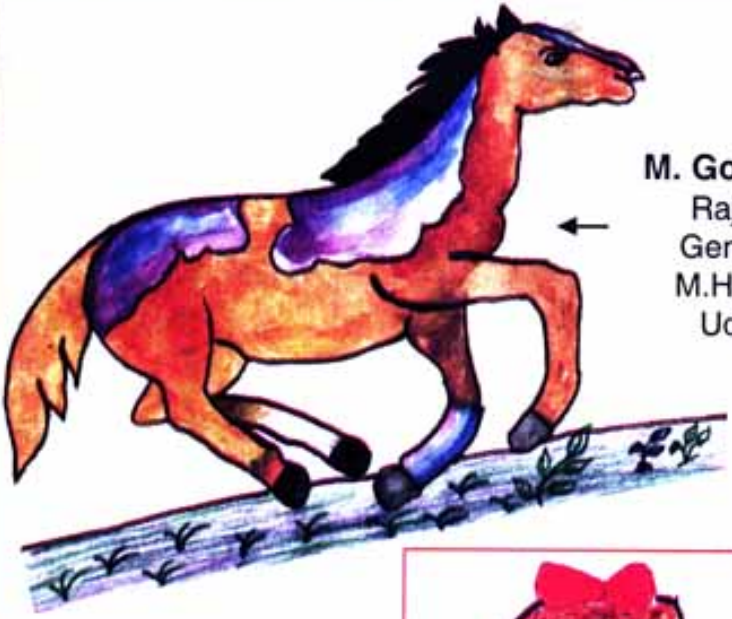
What's the Secret?

Ramchand : In my country, excavations show that we had cable TV lines a hundred years ago.
Bert : Look these are our telephone lines from the eighteenth century.
Ching Chow: Our excavations did not unearth cables. We must have had mobile phones.
— G.S. Anusha, Age 11, Indian School, Sohar

Aarthi : Preethi told me that you told her the secret that I had specifically asked you not to tell her...

Kirthi : Well, I expressly told Preethi not to tell you that I told her...

Aarthi : Oh dear! Please don't tell Preethi that I told you that she told me...
—Yazhini Anbumani, Erode



M. Gowri Padma
Rajalakshmi
Genguswamy
M.H.S.School,
Udumalpet

A. Krithika,
Std IV,
National Model
M.H.S.School,
Coimbatore

T. Lakshmi.
Std VIII,
Kendriya Vidyalaya - CLRI
Chennai

A. Vidhya,
Std VII,
Vedavalli Vidyalaya
S.S.School,
Walajapet

G. Sahiti
Std IX,
Kendriya Vidyalaya Picket,
Secunderabad

COLOUR Burst

Mihika Bala,
Std VIII, D.P.S School,
Korba

A MIRACLE

My friend Deepan and I were watching a tiny ant closely. The creature was carrying a feather several times his own size! He struggled along with his load as we watched keenly. At one point, a huge crack in the floor challenged him. It was about 10 mm wide. The ant paused briefly. He then laid the feather over the crack and gently crawled over the 'bridge' to get to the other side! Once across safely, he picked up his feather and continued his journey.

Though a tiny creature, he was smart - equipped with the brain to reason, explore, discover and overcome. A miracle of creation!

— C. Sajan Vas,
Std IX, K.V., Anna Nagar,
Chennai

MIDNIGHT MISCHIEF!

While holidaying in Bhubaneshwar, at my uncle's house, something really funny happened. I was asleep with my cousins Shalini and Pratishya one night in a cool A.C.room. At around eleven in the night, the strangest sounds of screaming and shouting suddenly filled the air. We were horrified. We switched on the lights but could see nothing, till we spotted a walkman which had been slipped into the room. It lay on the floor near the door and from it emanated the scary sounds! It was a joke played by our cousins Siddarth and Sunny just to scare us!

— Smruti Sudha Benera ,
Std IX, Chinmaya Vidyalaya,
Rourkela

POOR PUP!

One day last year, I was home from school and hungry, so I went out to a shop to buy something to eat. I happened to see a car run over a puppy on the road. It was a horrible and thoroughly shattering sight. The car driver did not stop. The puppy was badly hurt. I went back home and phoned 'KRUPA' - an animal care centre. They took a while to come and I was so tense till they arrived, not knowing how to help the pup. The vet from Krupa told us that the pup's jaw was crushed. They rushed him to their clinic and saved him. He is now happily in their custody. I thank God for saving him.

—Deepika N.S.,
Std VI, Sophia High School,
Bangalore

OF CREATION!

HOME ALONE

I was alone that night, my mind full of scary thoughts. It was raining heavily and strong winds were blowing outside. Suddenly the lights went out. The loud thunder and strong winds shook the window of my drawing room where I had been watching the T.V. This further increased my fear. I couldn't yell. My throat choked. I covered my face, out of fear, with my blanket. I felt someone come near me. I shut my eyes tightly. There he was–he had come up to me, he had caught my neck. He was going to kill me... In a moment I threw off my blanket and yelled at the top of my voice and began to run around. Suddenly I heard a knock at the door. I looked around. There was no one in the room. I slowly walked towards the door and opened it. A cool wind of relief came upon me. My parents were back. I was so relieved that I cried for long hugging my mother. I pleaded not to be left alone in the night anymore.

— Shilpa. S. Varma,
Std VII,
Chinmaya Vidyalaya,
Thripunithura

All in My Genes

I read my science book today,
And this is what it has to say:
Genes are an all important factor
In determining character.
"Hurrah! I cried, "Jumping jelly beans!"
Now I know what it means, it's all due to my genes!

Paying the dentist a huge sum
Asked my mother "Where do you get these teeth from?"
And said I, "It is all my genes, mom!"
"Where's the stapler, which I lent?
And the pen that my pen pal sent?"
Screamed my brother as I was leaving for school.
"It is all in my jeans (my pocket, I mean)"
Came my reply quick and cool!

— K. Shri Vidhyaa, Std VII,
Chettinad Vidyashram, Chennai

Time

Time is something precious,
Don't waste it; but be serious;
The new day with full twenty-four hours,
Awaits our skill and creative powers.

The two hands going round the clock,
And the pendulum hanging around the glass block;
Time gives us no signal of waiting,
Warns us that the world is racing.

Plan the hours of the day,
To always relax and play; but
Gain knowledge of taming time,
To waste it would be a crime.

Different timings all over the world,

The confusion sets us in twirl!
All because of latitudes and longitudes,
And all at different altitudes!

But everywhere time is the same,
To waste it would be a shame!

So friends, don't let time run out,
For if you do, you'll be bowled out!

— Vishnu Muralidharan, Std VIII, S.R.D.F. Vivekananda Vidyalaya, Chennai

The Dreaded Sheet!

Books and papers, notes and tests,
Time for preparation.
Perspiration runs down our necks
During examination.

Study, study, study hard
All the teachers scream!
To get good marks in your report card
Stay alert and keen.

Time to make up all missed work,
Time to learn your stuff;
Time to study and not shirk
Until you've done enough.

And when you finally sit down
To the dreaded sheet
Knees knock together, foreheads frown
Hearts play a drumming beat.

Examinations are just ordeals
That we must learn to face in life,
Something ordinary like games or meals
That we must handle without strife.

— Raadhika Vishvesh, Std VI, Navy Children's School, Mumbai

Materials required:

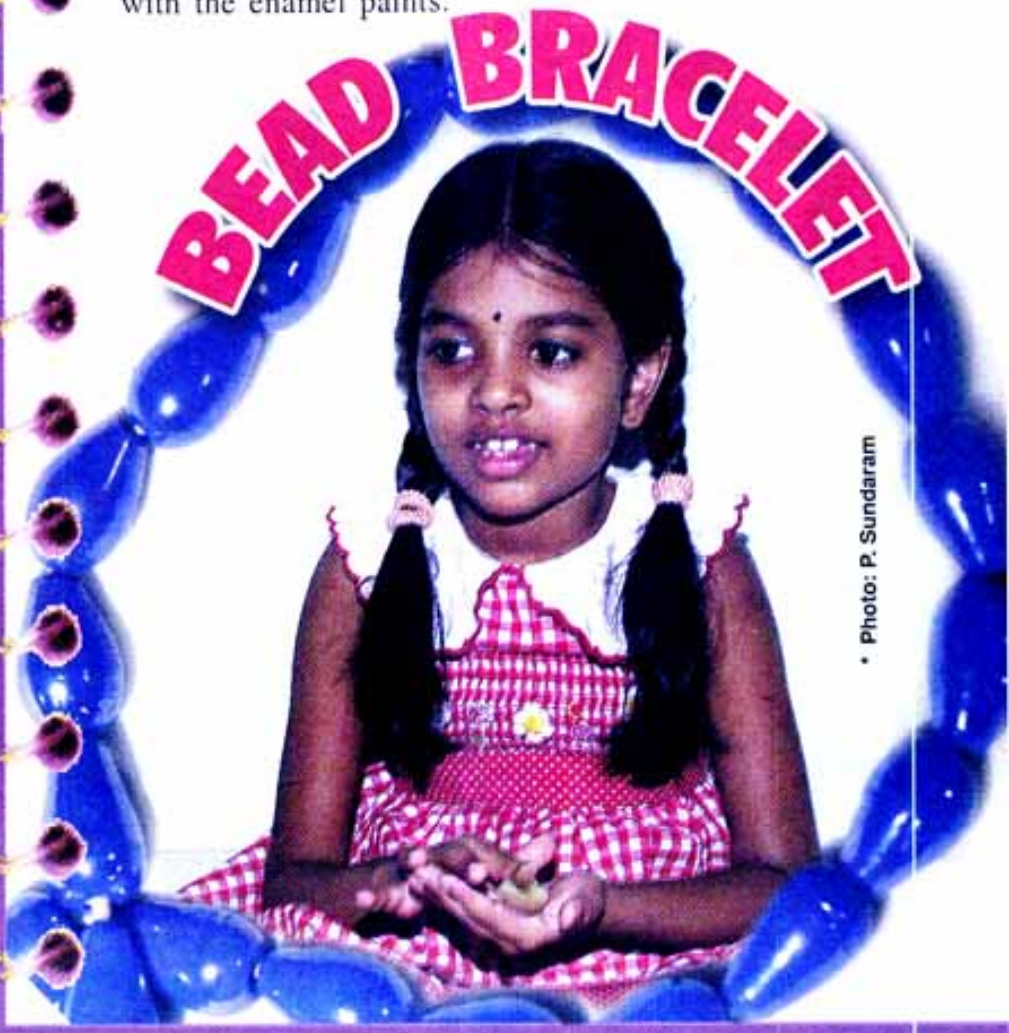
White china clay, a thick needle, enamel paints, plastic wire.

Method:

- Knead the clay well and make 10 -15 small balls.
- Make a hole in each ball by passing the needle right through it.
- Put out the beads to dry.
- When dry, paint them with the enamel paints. Set aside to dry.
- String the coloured beads in the plastic wire to the required length — long enough to go around your wrist. Tie the ends.
- You could try different shapes of beads.
- The beads could be strung together to make a necklace. The possibilities are endless!

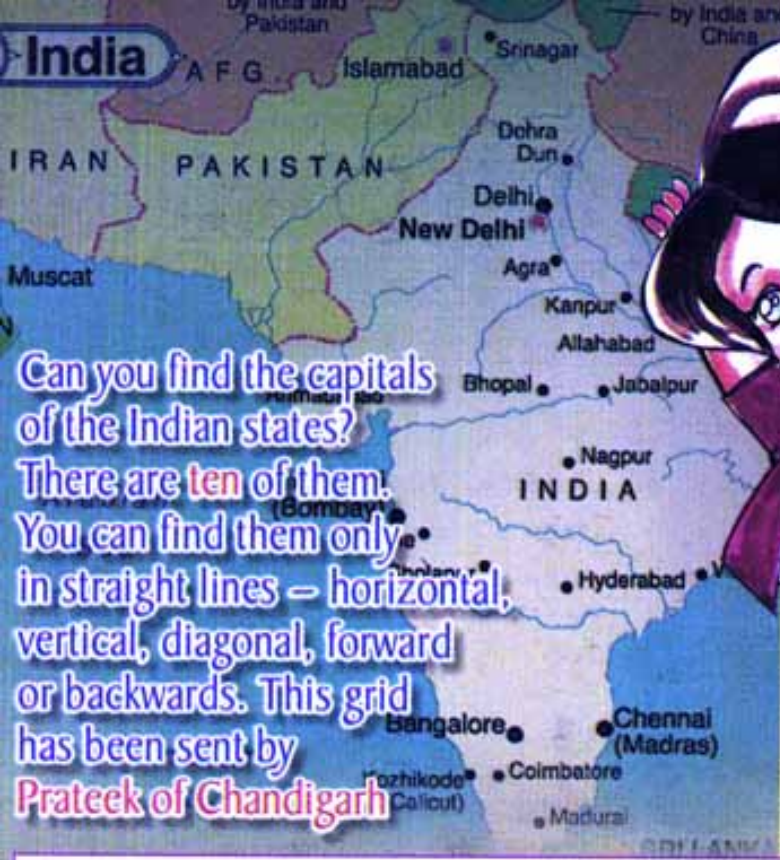
— Yazhini Anbumani,
Std VII, Kalaimagal Kalvi Nilayam, Erode

BEAD BRACELET



• Photo: P. Sundaram

Gogo's Grid -5



Can you find the capitals of the Indian states? There are ten of them. You can find them only in straight lines – horizontal, vertical, diagonal, forward or backwards. This grid has been sent by Prateek of Chandigarh

R	A	G	A	N	I	R	S	P	L	I	P
S	T	F	G	I	L	Y	A	N	T	A	T
M	K	D	E	C	A	L	G	B	N	M	F
P	F	G	H	J	H	K	L	A	M	N	R
U	I	O	V	P	P	N	J	K	J	L	U
L	T	I	K	A	M	I	H	O	K	O	P
F	A	U	B	D	I	E	J	T	G	L	I
I	N	A	Z	H	B	Z	O	G	M	N	A
X	A	Z	C	H	P	R	W	N	Q	U	J
N	G	N	P	L	A	M	T	A	V	C	T
N	A	M	O	P	R	T	S	G	L	F	X
R	R	O	O	T	F	A	L	M	I	H	S

Gogo's Grid-4

S	O	Q	N	K	I	L	A	N	P	B	R
V	S	R	I	L	A	N	K	A	D	C	A
I	F	C	F	I	C	I	Y	W	I	L	C
T	X	A	F	O	L	Y	L	I	C	I	S
I	A	F	A	T	M	O	A	A	M	L	A
R	A	C	B	D	A	F	I	T	H	B	G
V	J	L	D	N	B	E	N	P	I	D	A
A	F	K	I	O	U	M	A	P	A	M	D
M	L	O	R	M	C	A	M	E	L	C	A
O	M	N	S	T	A	I	S	E	T	A	M
T	E	Y	O	U	L	S	A	I	M	F	T
O	T	I	G	C	I	V	T	A	L	O	M

Congratulations!

The five lucky winners are:

1. Shilpa Menon,
   Carmel Junior College,
   Sonari
2. R.Saranya, Sri Sarada Matric
   Hr.Sec.School for Girls,
   Salem
3. Laxmikant Patra,
   B.J.E.M. School, M-15,
   BJB Nagar, BBSR-14
4. P.Sadhana, Sri Sankara Vidyalaya, East Tambaram
5. N.R.Subathra,
   Sri Sankara Vidyalaya,
   M.H.S.S. Chennai

Gogo's Grid - 5 ENTRY FORM

Name : (Mr/Ms) .....

Age : ..... Class .....

School : .....

*Residential Address : .....

..... Pin .....

Signature : .....

* Local address is a must for overseas entries.

The Editor, Gokulam, Kalki Buildings,
47-NP, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Ekkaduthangal, Chennai - 600 032.

• Strictly for school going children • Five lucky winners will get a cash award of Rs.50/- each. They will be decided by a draw of lots from out of the all correct entries. • Entries with completed grid on the reverse accepted on this form only • No xerox copies.

Last Date : 15.12.2006

Snowflake Bentley

RANI IYER

If you were a dairy farmer, born in a remote region, what would you choose to become? Wilson Bentley had no problem with this question. He became a scientist, musician, writer, and dairy farmer.

Bentley studied dew, rain, clouds, auroras, and weather patterns. His instruments were simple. To measure the raindrops, he put a pan of flour in rain. The size of the pellets helped him estimate the size of the raindrops! He maintained records of the size of raindrops for many seasonal rains.

However Bentley is best known for his work on snowflakes. Even as a young boy, Bentley noticed that each snowflake looked different His mother gave him a microscope so he could examine the beauty of each snowflake and draw them. The snowflakes always melted before he could complete the drawing.

When Bentley was 16, he read about a camera with its own microscope. He could take pictures of snowflakes on glass negative. Its microscope could magnify a tiny crystal up to 3,600 times its actual size! The camera was exorbitantly expensive, but his parents bought it for him the next year.

To Bentley's disappointment, he had no success photographing snowflakes the first winter. He worked in extremely cold conditions. During the second winter, he managed to make pictures standout by using a sharp knife to etch around the negatives.

He photographed more than 5,000 snowflakes. In 1931, scientists raised money to publish his book, Snow Crystals which contained 2,500 pictures of snowflakes! He was the only person who had photographed snowflakes during that time.

Today, a plaque in his hometown of Jericho, Vermont, honours Wilson Bentley. Forty years after his death, children in the village set up a museum in his honour. Bentley showed that it is what you do that earns respect from people.

KANTHALAKSHMI CHANDRAMOULI

The SOAP and the BEADS

Mr. Rao looked worried as he joined his family at the breakfast table.

"I'm afraid we'll have to leave for Puducherry, Shanta," he said to his wife. "My brother had had an accident and is badly hurt. We have to leave immediately."

"But what about the children? We can't leave them alone!" replied his wife.

"Oh! Come on mom! I am not a baby at 14. I am quite capable of looking after myself and Ranjana," said Ramesh.

"He is right, you know. The children are responsible and they should be given a chance. Anyway its just for a couple of days," said Mr. Rao.

As they were about leave, Mr. Rao said, "Check all the doors and windows are secure and don't open the door to any stranger. The emergency numbers are there next to the phone..."

"Dad, dad! Take it easy. We won't be going out today and tomorrow is a holiday anyway. You will be back on Monday morning. We'll look after each other and the house," broke in Ranjana, who was two years younger to her brother.

Ramesh cleared the table and put away the dishes, while Ranjana dried the clothes that her mother had washed. The day passed peacefully with the children finishing their homework and watching television.

"Don't you have to study for your exam?" asked Ranjana, on her way to the terrace to bring down the clothes.

"Don't bug me. I know what I have to do" shot back Ramesh.

After dinner, they decided to turn in early since it started raining and there was nothing worthwhile on T.V.

"Thud", a loud noise awoke Ranjana. "What was that?" wondered Ranjana. She thought she heard someone walking on the terrace.

The door to her room opened slowly. Ranjana opened her mouth to scream when

she heard Ramesh wishper "It's me Ranju. There is a thief in the house."

"Lock this door quickly," came Ranjana's urgent whisper.

"No!" said Ramesh. "He will get away. I have an idea to catch the thief." Ramesh went into the bathroom aided by his torchlight and came out carrying a mug of water, soap and a bottle of oil.

"Quick, Ranju, give me your bead necklace."

Ranjana handed over her multi - coloured bead necklace to her brother.

Ramesh broke the string and added the beads to the mug of water, then he added the oil and soap, and poured the mixture at the entrance of the room. Ranjana in the meantime called up the child helpline and gave the details. Just as she completed the call the door opened and the thief entered. He took one step, only to slip and fall heavily. In a trice Ranjana and Ramesh dropped a bedsheet on him and tied him up. The doorbell rang. Leaving Ramesh with the thief, Ranjana carefully stepped over the beads and oil and opened the door to the police.

Fir and

Christmas without a Christmas tree? Unheard of! But when and where did this tradition of Christmas trees begin? It was way way back, many centuries ago.

The roots of the Christmas tree can probably be traced to ancient Egyptians and Hebrews, who treated the wreaths and garlands of evergreen trees as a symbol of eternal life. The Romans decorated their temples with green branches and leaves. Tree worship was common among pagan Europeans, something that survived the advent of Christianity. Customs included decorating their houses and barn with evergreen branches in the new year to scare away evil spirits.

Christmas tree, as we know it now originated in Germany. Legend has it that a monk who went around to teach the Word of God, used the triangular shaped fir to describe the Holy Trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The converted people began to revere the fir tree as God's tree. By the 12th century it was being hung upside down from the ceiling at Christmas time in central Europe as a symbol of christianity.

The first decorated christmas tree was probably in the early 16th century. Martin Luther is said is have decorated a small tree with candle to show his children how stars twinkled through the dark night. The Christmas tree evolved in and around Germany and spread to the neighbouring areas. Christmas tree decorations spawned as an industry in Germany. Tinsel fairies and other knick-knacks that were hung on the trees all over the world then, were shipped from Germany. It was however not popular in England until the Victorian era.

It was in the 18th century that this custom was brought to England by the German Prince Albert when he married Queen Victoria. The Christmas tree was first set up in the Windsor Castle in 1841. It was decorated with candles, cakes and candies, which were hung from the branches by ribbons and paperchains.

Festivity

What was done by the royals was soon followed by the common people. While the German immigrants did take the Christmas tree to America much earlier, it was accepted and followed only after Queen Victoria had decorated a tree back in England. The rich households in the east began following the custom. By the end of the 19th century it was a popular and well entrenched custom in America, and all of Europe. This custom then spread to the other countries through missionaries in the 20th century. Somewhere along the way came the custom of decorating the tree with intricate paper designs and placing gifts at the foot of the tree.

Source: Children's Knowledge Bank 5

– C. Maheshwari, Std XI, Sir Sivaswamy Kalalaya H.S. School, Chennai

The Case of the Cupboard

All quiet in Basavappa Colony. But the girls were not fooled by this apparent calmness.

"Keep your eyes and ears open," said Geetha. "Find out if any family is leaving Bangaluru on a holiday. That whould be the cue since our burglar strikes only when a house is empty."

The girls set to work dividing the streets and houses among them. Each one was responsible for thirty-three houses. The hundredth was Nagarajan's which all three had to watch!

After about five or six days Rita had some news. Manjunath with his family was leaving for Mangalore. He would be gone for a couple of days to attend a marriage of a near relative. His house will be kept locked for three nights with no one to look after it.

"He lives in second street, house number fifteen", said Rita.

"We will keep watch over it," said Geetha.

"But how?" asked Suriya.

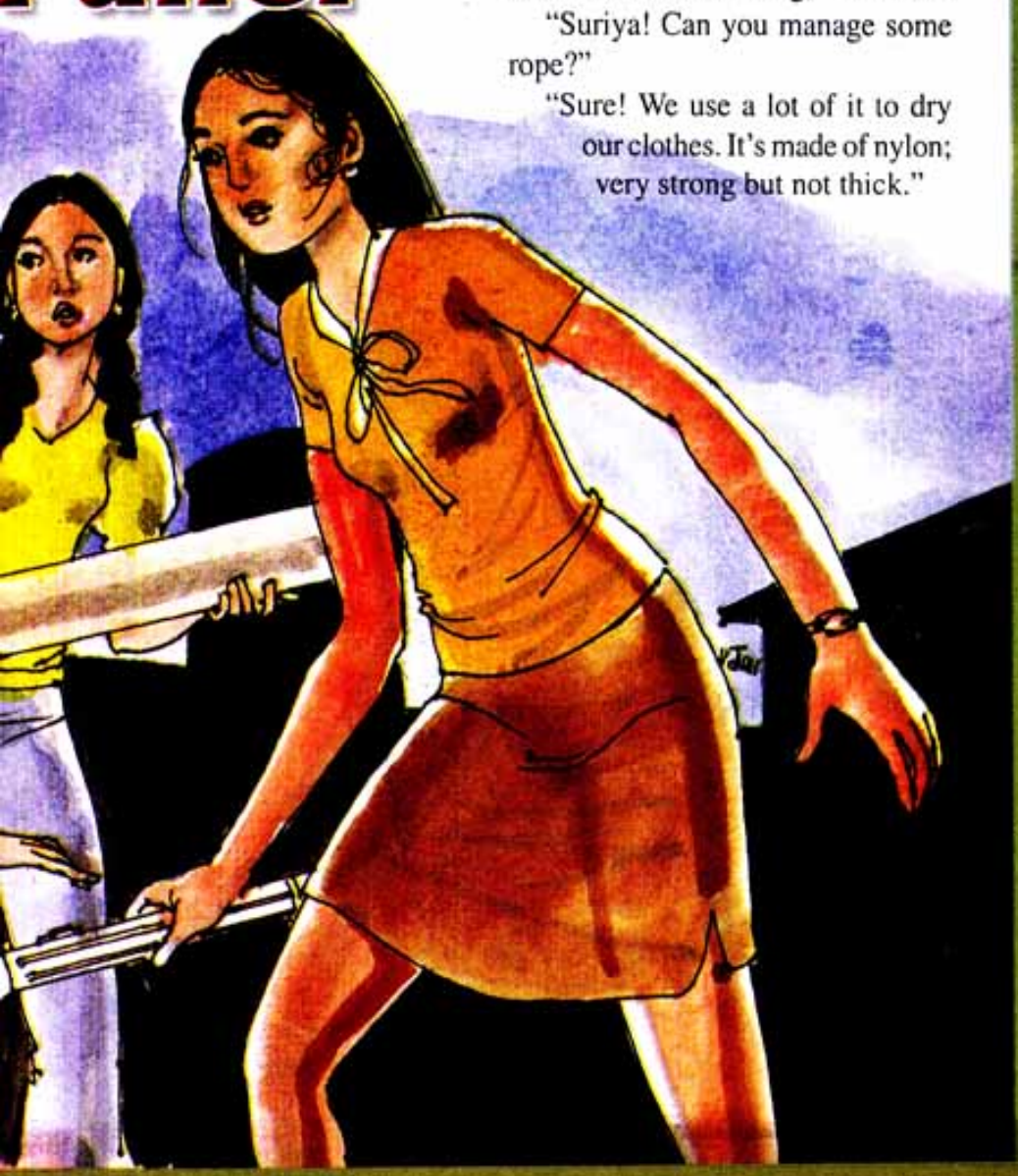
"Simple... go to bed with a big yawn, but keep awake. When you hear others in your family snore, sneak away, closing and locking the front door silently from the outside. Carry the key with you safely tied to a string around your neck... I'll bring my brother's cricket bat with me. It can be used to club someone if the need arises!"

"For my part, I'll bring a three cell flash light. Daddy changed the batteries only yesterday. The light beam is almost blinding," said Rita.

"Suriya! Can you manage some rope?"

"Sure! We use a lot of it to dry our clothes. It's made of nylon; very strong but not thick."

Puller



"Good! We'll be properly equipped. Rita, you hide behind the tree in front of Manjunath's house. I'll be behind the corner dust bin, though the stench would be horrible and Suriya will take her position in the plot adjacent, number fourteen. The croton bushes in the garden will hide her."

"We will buy three whistles" said Rita, "and when one blows the whistle, the others will rush to help her!"

"Good idea", said Geetha, and gave a resounding pat on her back which nearly floored her!

The girls carried out their plan to the dot. In spite of the stench Geetha was about to doze off, when she heard the shrill whistle! She ran towards plot number fifteen and could see a figure dressed in white, clamber over the compound wall!

The three girls were too much for him. The powerful flashlight in Rita's hand blinded him, while the cricket bat in Geetha's grip swung to hit him hard on his head! While his hands were raised to ward off further blows, Suriya had circled his legs with the nylon rope and had managed a loop with a running knot. She gave sharp tug, and the noose tightened. The poor chap lost his balance and fell on the ground with a loud thud. In no time at all his hands too were tied up.

"Thank Heavens! You have not gagged me yet," said the unfortunate man. "I am not who you think I am. I am CID Chandra sent by the commissioner himself to keep a watch over this colony, particularly this house."

"All lies! Fibber! Thief!" -- the girls accused him, in chorus!

"If you don't believe me take the wallet from my pant pocket and look

at my ID card!"

Rita acted as suggested by him. The flash light helped them to acertain that he was speaking the truth.

"The Commissioner warned me about your over-enthusiasm. Girls!

I'm supposed to protect you from any danger and that is why I did not put up a stiff fight. I was afraid of hurting you. Please untie me and go home. I'll look after this house."

Exactly at that moment they heard a shrill voice calling, "Chandra, Chandra! Come over here at once!"

"It's Mukherjee!" exclaimed Rita. "No doubt!"

"Yes! And he needs my help...please..." pleaded Chandra.

The girls untied Chandra in a fraction of a second and ran towards the spot from where the call came. But Chandra over took them. "I heard you sir! I'm coming! Where are you?"

"Over here! Corner house!"

Plot twenty belonged to Majumdar. The gate was locked but Chandra heaved himself over the compound wall. The girls acted like springs. They were used to scaling walls higher than this.

Rita's flash light caught Mukherjee training his revolver over the head of...

Nagaraj!

"I'll take care of him boss," said Chandra. A hand cuff appeared in his palm as if by magic and settled on Nagaraj's wrists!

By now a few lights were on in some of the neighbouring houses and one or two residents stepped on to the street more out of curiosity than boldness. Many who were awakened by the commotion chose to remain inside to avoid trouble.

"Take him to my car parked at the entrance to this colony", said Mukherjee to Chandra, and gave him the keys to his Maruthi Esteem. "I'll take these girls to their families and join you as soon as possible".

"Sir...Sir...My family..." sobbed a trembling Nagaraj.

"You suould be ashamed of yourself," said Mukherjee with disdain. "You thought we will suspect the 'bureau puller' of Chennai! But you committed a big mistake! You were so greedy that

you pulled off burglaries one after the other at very short intervals and in the same locality. That assured us that it was a local job!"

"Forgive me sir! Please! I'll return all the cash and jewellery stolen by me. They are quite safe... atleast most of it."

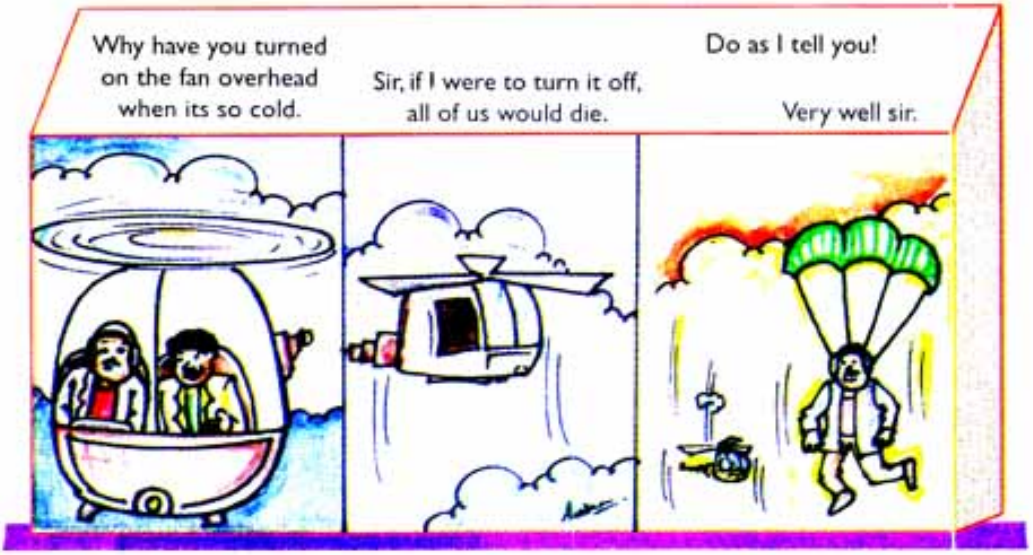
"Forgive you? that's for the judge to decide. However I'll talk to your family to reassure them, before I take you away. Now, go with Chandra quietly to my car."

After some excited exchange of greetings Mukherjee settled down in Goutham's small drawing room. Reshma always a good host, managed to make some tea while training her ear to the conversation going on a few feet away.

"Pity, my cricket bat was used to club the wrong person!" moaned Renu, after listening to the story narrated by the CoP. "But how did you know that Nagaraj was going to burgle Majumdar's house and not Manjunath's residence?"

"I received a call from Majumdar late at night, while I was preparing to go to bed. He was talking from the City station and said that he was boarding the 11.45 train to Chennai with his family. It was an urgent, last minute decision in response to a phone call from Chennai. His father had had a heart attack!... We pray for his recovery..."

Mukherjee paused and continued: "He had called in response to the message spread by our 'power puff girls.' From the plan of the colony I had prepared, I knew that Nagaraj lived adjacent to Majumdar's house at the back. They shared the same compound wall. Nagaraj must have observed Majumdar's family packing up in panic. Ofcourse I had no proof against Nagaraj but I didn't want to take any chances. I decided that Majumdar's house must be protected. But all my men had been allotted duties for the night.I had



BIRTHDAY BASH!

Arkita and Mounica celebrate their 15th birthday on 19 December "May your friendship blossom and may your future be bright."

- Friends and family

already sent Chandra to this area to protect the 'power puff girls', but he did not know anything about Majumdar's sudden departure. So I decided to come over myself... dressed in casuals, as I was in a hurry!"

"Without the uniform, you look just like anyone of us," said Goutham.

"Well, an uniform adds authority, though your daughter doesn't seem to feel it! God! How she argues and how bravely she defies authority!" He laughed. "She and her friends are very clever, but I wish they use their brains to study and not to encounter danger."

"But when you make light of our observations and throw cold water on our surmises, what are we to do? We had to act on our own," burst out Geetha.

"Oh, I brushed aside your observations and surmises only to discourage you from poking your nose in what is our business. But it seems to have had the opposite effect!"

Mukherjee stood up. "Now I must really get going", he said. "Goutham! I leave Rita and Suriya in your care for the night. See to it that their parents are informed. Ask them to take it easy and not to scold the girls. However, parents must tell their children not to be carried away by cartoon characters and screen heroes."

He gave each one of the 'power puff girls' a pat of appreciation. "Sorry girls! No prize or award for you! You did not catch the thief; I did!"

"Who needs your award or prize", said Rita in a huff.

"We were right in our detections and surmises", declared Suriya.

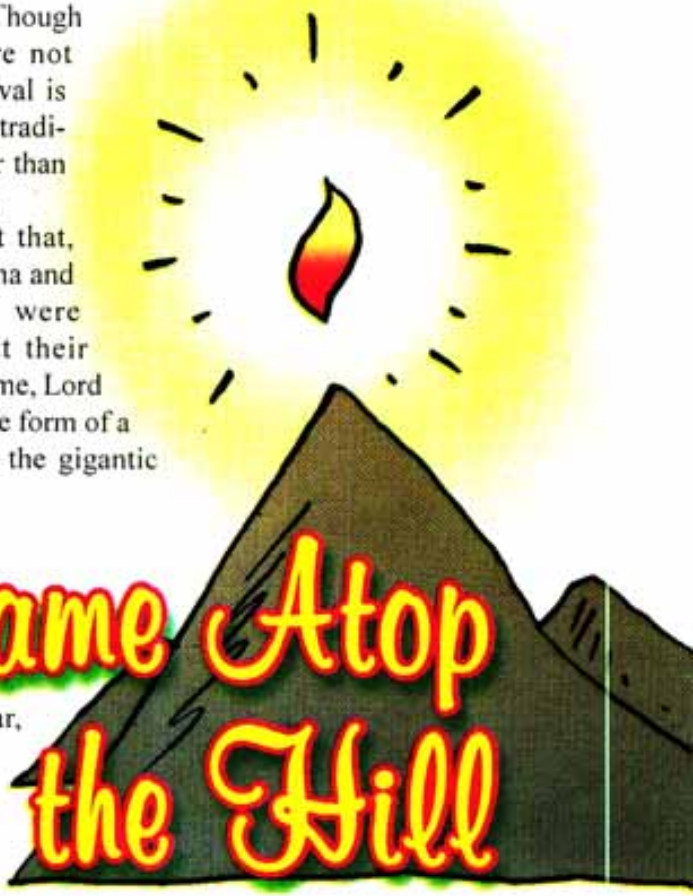
"And that's what matters most!" concluded Geetha.

(Concluded.)

Flame Atop the Hill

While earthern lamps and candles are lit during Diwali in the north, the festival of lights in Tamil Nadu is celebrated on the full-moon night of the tamil month 'Karthigai' which coincides with the star Krithika. The festival is celebrated in a special manner in Thiruvannamalai. This year the festival falls on December 4th. Though many people are not aware, this festival is one of the oldest traditions, much older than Diwali or Pongal.

Legend has it that, once, Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu were quarelling about their powers. At that time, Lord Shiva assumed the form of a pillar. On seeing the gigantic form of the pillar, Brahma and Vishnu stopped quarrelling and involved themselves in finding the two ends of the pillar. Brahma assumed the form of a swan and moved upwards and Vishnu took the form of a boar and dug the earth and went searching for the end downwards. It is said that, even after searching for several years, they were unable to find the ends. Finally, they found out that it was none other than Shiva in the form of a pillar when Lord Shiva turned into a grand ball of fire on the Thiruvannamalai hill.



On this day, thousands of people come from different places to get a good darshan of Lord Shiva and to see

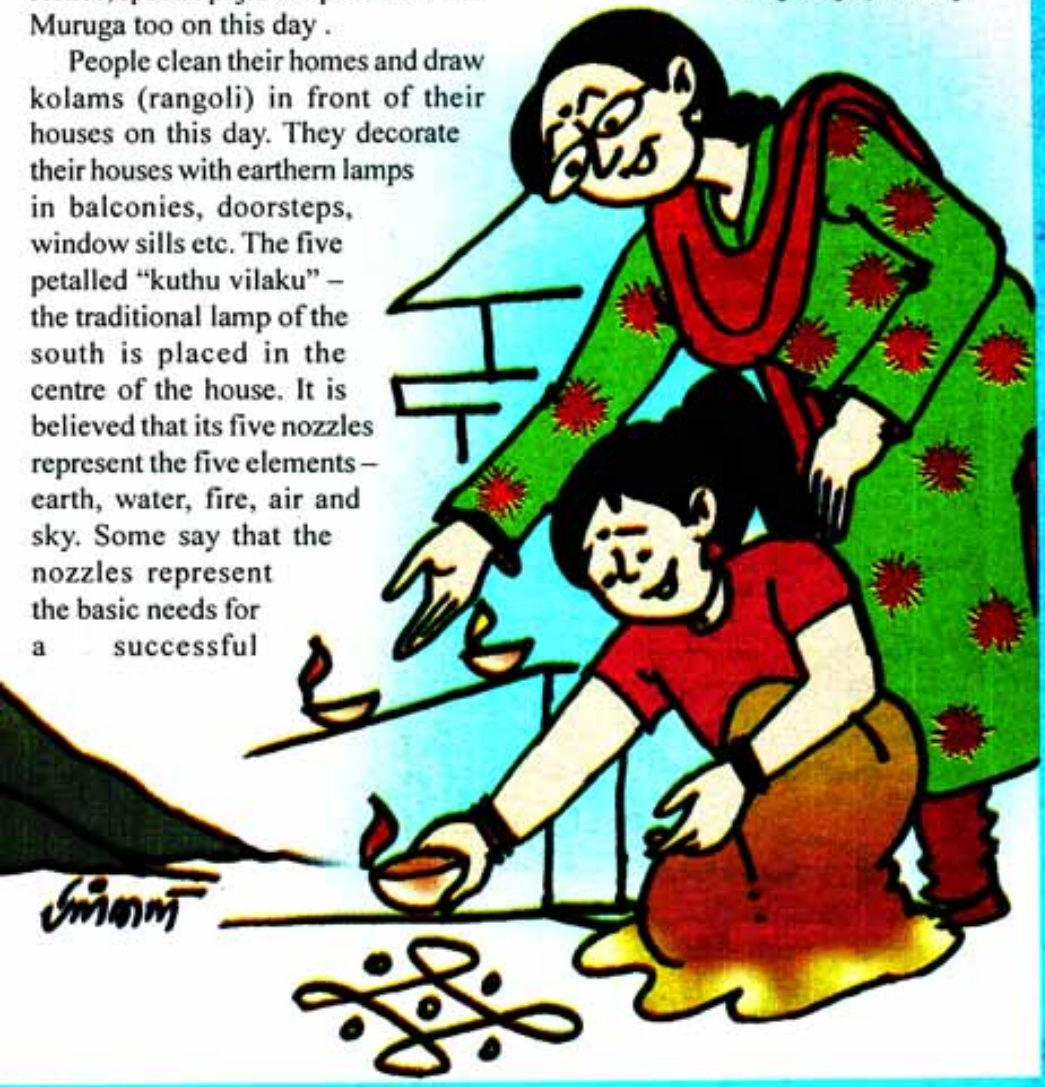
the great torch light atop the hill. This is considered as the real "Karthigai Deepam"

There is another legend that is also associated with this festival. Lord Muruga or Skanda took the form of six babies in the lake, "Saravana Poigai". It was on this day that his mother Parvati united the six babies. Hence, special pujas are performed for Muruga too on this day .

People clean their homes and draw kolams (rangoli) in front of their houses on this day. They decorate their houses with earthern lamps in balconies, doorsteps, window sills etc. The five petalled "kuthu vilaku" – the traditional lamp of the south is placed in the centre of the house. It is believed that its five nozzles represent the five elements – earth, water, fire, air and sky. Some say that the nozzles represent the basic needs for a successful life - health, wealth, learning, courage and longevity. Some other familiar lamps are the lakshmi vilaku and the agal vilaku. This festival is celebrated for three days.

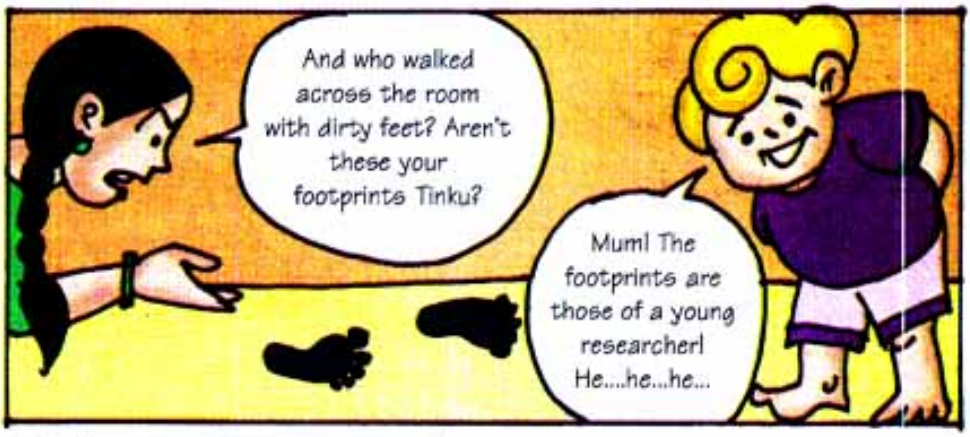
Usually crackers and fireworks is saved up from Deepavali and fired on Karthikai.

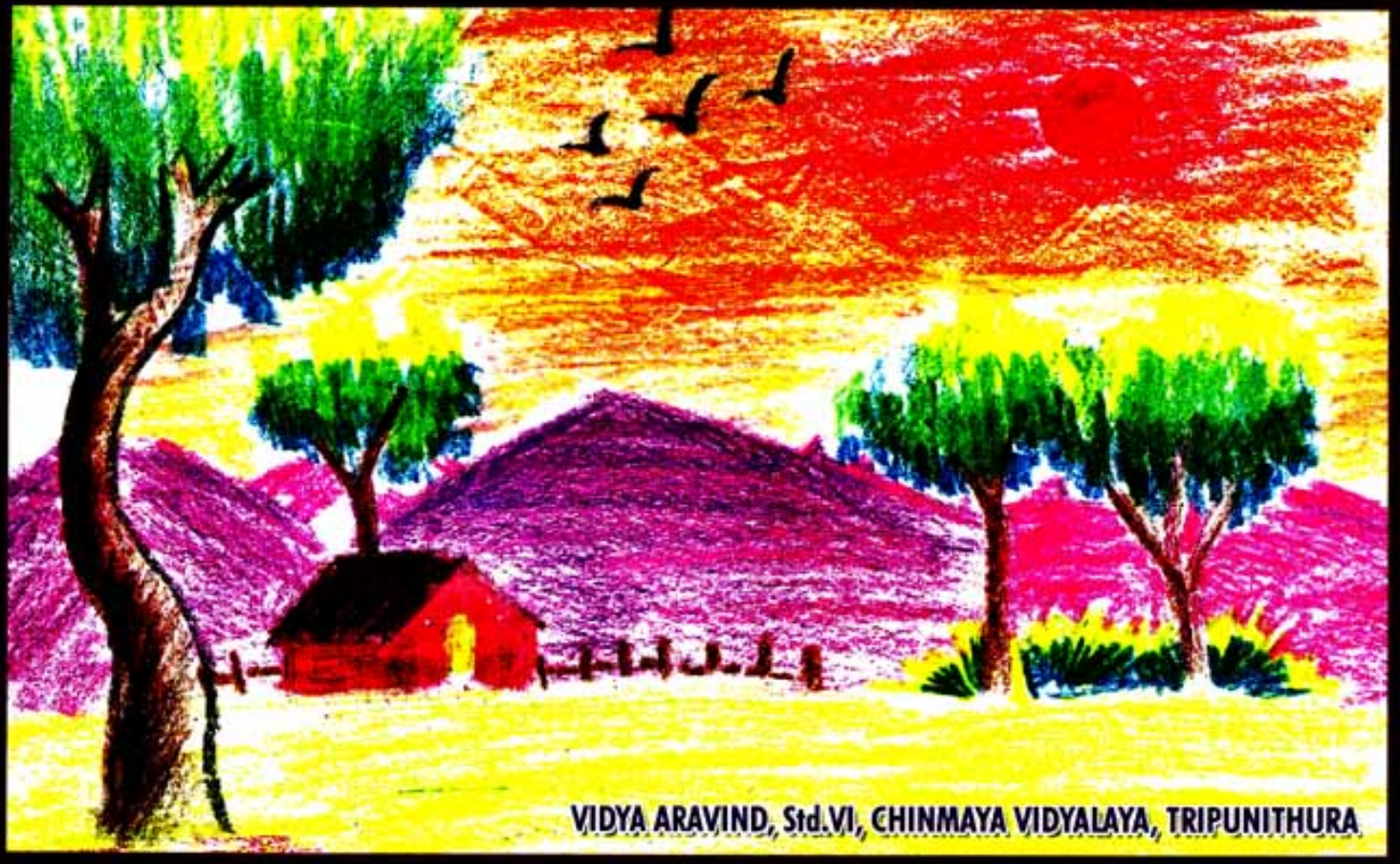
– Srinidhi Sridhar, Std IX , Mahatma Gandhi Centenary Vidyalaya, Trichy.



TINKU

Story, Pictures: Pillai

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